

Window on Jordan

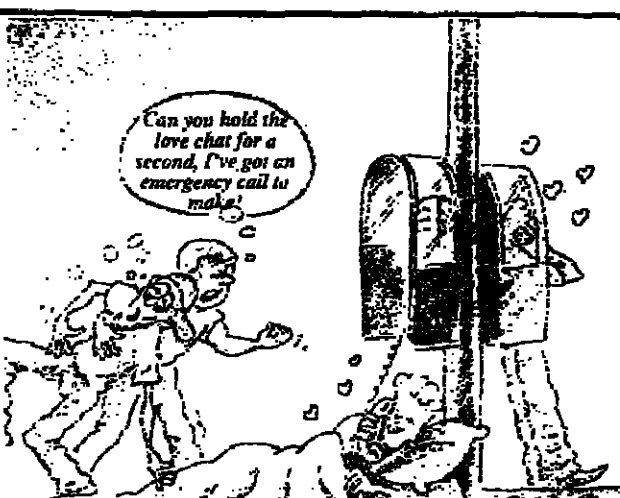
By Ilham Sadiq
Star Staff Writer

IT WAS late at night and the house was overcome by silence as the Abu Ali's family slept deeply. Then the phone rang. The only thing that springs to one's mind is "Could it be bad news?" As he picked up the receiver, Abu Ali was preparing himself for the worst. He was surrounded by his worried wife and children. But no one was on the other side. Abu Ali waited and then hung up. He asked his family to return to their beds. But no sooner had he put off the light than the phone rang again. And again there was no answer. As it rang for the third time,

Abu Ali's thoughts were with his son who is studying abroad. Could something have happened to him? The old man picked up the receiver again and shouted: "Who is it?" From the other side came a hysterical laughter, and a low voice murmured: "Sorry to disturb you but I want to know what time it is." Though he was somewhat relieved, Abu Ali started shouting and cursing, then put the receiver down. The caller rang again, he was playing games causing Abu Ali and his family emotional distress. But this is not an unusual phenomenon. Many Jordanians now complain of receiving calls from

pranksters who abuse the system and sometimes insult people. Nuisance calls are made by sick people and their acts reflect inner feeling of distress or anxiety, according to doctors. "When my telephone rings at a late hour, I expect to hear bad news," said Um Saeed, a housewife who has become tired of obscene or nuisance callers. She asked the phone company to intervene. "Their calls are affecting relations with my husband, he even threatened to divorce me. I am afraid he may harm my daughters," she said. She added that her husband received calls from

Continued on page 2



The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

● De l'indépendance de la justice

● L'obésité en Jordanie

page 10



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أسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Israel signals readiness to leave South Lebanon

By Lee Hockstader

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Nearly 13 years after declaring it was occupying part of southern Lebanon as its "security zone," Israel is signaling it is ready to withdraw its military forces from its neighbor to the north—if Lebanon supplies requisite security guarantees.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and other Israeli leaders have said in recent days that Israel will pull its troops back inside its own territory if Lebanon promises to take tough action to prevent cross-border guerrilla attacks by forces of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah movement.

"The moment a promise is made that Hezbollah will be dismantled in south Lebanon and will not pose a threat to the northern communities" of Israel, Netanyahu said Monday, "we will be willing to leave."

Lebanon rejected the overture, insisting that Israel's withdrawal be unconditional and that any negotiations are out of the question. "Lebanon's mere acceptance of sitting down at the negotiating table would constitute a backing down on the case of (UN) resolution 425," said Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bouez, referring to a resolution passed in 1978 in response to an earlier Israeli occupation. It called for unconditional withdrawal.

Continued on page 2

US officials, opposition call for covert plan to oust Saddam

By Robin Wright

WASHINGTON—It could take at least three to five years—and probably longer. A cheap version would cost \$1 billion a year—and even doubling or tripling its budget would provide no guarantee. Countries in the neighborhood and key allies would have to host or collaborate in the plot—when already they are reluctant to participate. All in all, a clandestine scheme to topple the regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein does not look either as feasible or efficient as it might seem to outsiders, US intelligence experts say. "I don't know anyone in the intelligence community who thinks there is a covert action solution that would change the regime in Iraq," said Mitt Beardon, who for six years in the 1980s ran the CIA operation to topple the Soviet-backed Afghan government, the most successful US "covert" action in half a century.

"And then there is the danger of the results. We succeeded in Afghanistan, but look what we left behind," Beardon said. In that country, a rigidly Islamic regime is now in power, and a messy civil war rages on sporadically almost a decade after the Soviets withdrew.

Since the 1991 Gulf War, the CIA has sponsored at least four schemes to disrupt or disable Saddam's government with marginal success. Trying to replace him is an even bigger challenge. Yet covert action is becoming the solution du jour in Washington. The CIA has toyed with a range of plans since the crisis over weapons inspections erupted last fall. US officials say, in the days since 23 February, when the Iraqi leader struck a deal on the inspections issue with the United Nations to avert UN military strikes, Sen. Arlen Specter was the first to call for covert action to "bring Saddam Hussein to his knees."

Continued on page 2

So without specifically endorsing covert action, "As long as Saddam Hussein is in power, we will be faced with this challenge of his unending zeal to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction," said Sen. John McCain, a member of the Armed Services Committee, on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press."

"We've got to change the objective in Iraq and say that we're going to try to replace this dictatorship with a democracy," said Sen. Bob Kerrey, on the same program. Kerrey is the chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence.

So what would it take to topple Saddam's regime? Only a minority among intelligence and Middle East experts believes that it is even doable. And these analysts warn that the covert scheme would require a long-term commitment.

"This is not something that can be accomplished before the November election or even a year from now," said a former CIA covert agent—who requested anonymity. Success would be years, not months, away, the agent said.

Any plot would also have no chance of success by itself. "It has to be part of a coordinated strategy that includes political, economic and military aspects as well," said L. Paul Bremer III, a former State Department counterterrorism chief.

That means steps such as tightening economic sanctions through naval interdiction, expanding "no-fly" zones enforced by US and European warplanes to cover all of Iraq, and expelling Saddam's regime from the United Nations—at the same time the CIA and its Iraqi agents conduct clandestine activities inside the country, Bremer said.

Continued on page 2

The experts say, Saddam's propaganda machine would need to be sabotaged, and clandestine outlets created as alternatives. A series of armed and independent cells would have to be set up to challenge, take hostage or eliminate security forces, Iraq's most important power prop. Daily life—ranging from commerce to entertainment—would have to be disrupted in diverse ways, to prove the scope of the challenge.

But each aspect of such a scheme is prone to problems. The majority of experts say. Opposition groups are deeply divided. Fighting between Kurdish rivals provided a pretext for Saddam's forces to retake part of northern Kurdistan in 1996. The CIA was forced out at the same time.

Also, US support for Saddam's internal foes has been discredited since the Bush administration's call for uprisings after the Gulf War sparked Kurdish and Shiite Muslim rebellions that were quashed when US troops allowed Saddam to use his helicopter gunships.

Unlike Afghanistan, Iraq's political and geographical terrain would not be supportive. The southern deserts do not provide cover for clandestine cross-border traffic, nor do many gulf governments want to be seen supporting US spy craft.

In Europe, France and Russia have already initiated oil deals with Iraq to go into effect the moment sanctions are lifted—deals that any new regime might ignore.

Nor does the United States track record in targeting foes for ouster inspire confidence. Despite repeated US efforts to undo his rule, Fidel Castro will mark 40 years in power next year. In Somalia, the failed 1993 manhunt for warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid resulted in the deaths of 18 Americans and the eventual withdrawal of more than 10,000 US forces. Aidid died of natural causes in 1996. Even the Iraqi opposition doubts the efficacy of a covert plot. "To engineer a coup

from outside using exile groups is in the realm of science fiction," said Ahmad Chalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress, which ran a CIA-backed operation in Kurdistan until 1996. "It's also too late for covert operations. It must be open."

Chalabi is now making the rounds in Washington with his own plan, which includes: A US declaration that Saddam's regime is in violation of UN cease-fire resolutions.

As punishment, a US declaration of a military exclusion zone south of the 31st parallel, north of the 35th parallel and in the western desert adjacent to Saudi Arabia and Jordan—to be enforced by US air power. Iraq would be forced to move its tanks and artillery or face aerial bombardment. This zone includes many of Iraq's most productive oil fields, as well as vital land and sea routes.

Formation of a provisional government.

Escalation of an anti-Saddam propaganda campaign, including radio broadcasts countrywide.

A US indictment of Saddam as a war criminal.

US aid of \$100 million to the Iraqi National Congress, using as collateral Iraqi assets frozen by economic sanctions. The money would pay for antitank weapons and troop-transport vehicles for 5,000 opposition forces.

Once Iraqi military equipment has been removed from the south, the Iraqi National Congress and its equipment land at Umm al Qasr. Opposition forces would clear loyalist security forces, administer the area and use southern oil for income. A branch of the government would also be established in northern Kurdistan.

Continued on page 2



A man tries to comfort an ailing pelican at Magdalena Bay in Baja California, Mexico. (photo by Christopher Reynolds.)

Ma'an ponders aftermath of tough clamp down

AMMAN (Star)—Well into its second week, the Ma'an riots continue to reverberate in the country. Many are criticizing what they see as the overreaction of the government to pro-Iraq rallies in Amman, Irbid, and of course Ma'an.

Though the government has lifted a week-long curfew imposed on the troubled city, tensions continue in the aftermath of clashes between pro-Iraq demonstrators and anti-riot police.

The government puts the blame on the outspoken opponent Leith Shbeilat, president of Jordan's Engineers Association who traveled to Ma'an one day before the riots. Shbeilat is accused of inciting the townspeople to demonstrate after the Friday noon prayer.

New information was revealed after the lifting of the curfew on the city. According to opposition sources in Ma'an, it was the government which provoked demonstrators who marched peacefully protesting against the US threats to attack Iraq.

Mohammed Kateb, 23, a passerby was shot by an unidentified person—the police said it was the demonstrators. However, the Al Kateb family asked for a full investigation into the killing. More than 20 people and policemen were injured in clashes. The security forces rounded up 47 people on



Rasheed

charges of organizing riots. Chairman of the Arab Organization of Human Rights, Mr. Najeeb Al Rashdan told The Star that several residents in Ma'an complained to the organization that the cutting off of electricity on the city caused huge losses to several private projects. Some owners are thinking of suing the government and are demanding compensation.

Even the pride and joy of the business sector in that part of the world, the Ma'an Chamber of Commerce is angry with the government. Officials are upset about what they call as the "mass punishment of the city."

The Chamber are asking some lawyers to file a case against the government at the High Court for the adverse effects on local businesses. For their side, the Jordanian

Committee for the Defence of Iraq, established by the opposition is also filing a case against the government. However, there appears to be confusion because of wrangling within the different parties of the loose alliance.

"We decided to sue the government for violating human rights and for sieging Ma'an and beating peaceful demonstrators in Amman," said Mr. Salem Al Nahas, member of the committee.

Minister of Interior, Nathir Rasheed insists that Shbeilat instigated the riots. Family and supporters of Shbeilat was denied a permission to visit him in prison. Deputy Mohammad Al Azaydeh who was also denied permission to visit Shbeilat attacked the Lower House. He described it as a "dead body" when he and other 12 deputies failed to pass a no-confidence motion against the Minister of Interior.

However, opposition sources said that what happened in Ma'an cannot be isolated from similar clashes in Amman at Al Hussein Mosque where a number of former minister and deputies and others were beaten by anti-riot squads.

But the government now wants to hastily bring the situation to "normality" after lifting the curfew. There are positive signals by some officials who are hinting at releasing Shbeilat and the others that were arrested in Ma'an.

Some social and professional sectors are still outraged by the government's measures in Ma'an last week, describing them as tough and unfair. If they are meant to punish those involved, then why cut off electricity and water and harming all who were worried.

Some women activists also resigned from their posts in the a pro-government Women's National Federation. Ma'an branch; these included Suhailah Abu Darwish, Asma'a Al Bawals and Waf'a Talhooni. Also, some members of the National Constitutional Party (NCP) have resigned including: Saleh Suleiman Rafay'a, Yousef Al Khatib, Ahmad Abbas. The resignations came after a statement by the head of the NCP Mr. Abdel Hadi Al Majali supporting the government harsh measures.

Deputy Mohammad Oran, general secretary of the pan-Arabist Arab Land party will hold a press conference today, Thursday to discuss the events in Ma'an.

INSIDE



● Princess Wijdan on Islamic art page 2

● Living the war in Iraq page 6

● The unsinkable Titanic page 11

By Steven Mufson

BEIJING—Entrepreneurs of the world, step right up! Get them while they last! China is issuing a special limited edition of the "Communist Manifesto" to mark the anniversary of the tract written 150 years ago by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Written as revolution was spreading across Europe in 1848, the manifesto has now been turned into a marketing opportunity. Never mind the masses, China is issuing 3,000 commemorative copies of the work and 500 copies of a collectors' edition, the state-run New China News Agency said last week.

"In China the manifesto has fostered generations of Communist stalwarts and proletarian revolutionaries," the agency said. And now those who have struck it rich during the economic-reform era can buy a special one. It didn't say how much a copy will cost.

The new editions feature replicas of the cover and contents page of the original German-language edition as well as reproductions of Marx's handwriting.

Although enshrined as one of the Chinese Communist Party's basic texts and still rou-

Marketing Marx in China

dually given homage at major party functions, the "Communist Manifesto" is out of step with the current policies of the ruling Communist Party in Beijing.

Marx and Engels called for revolution, but the current Chinese government craves stability. Marx sought equality; China has created vast inequalities as it tries to create financial rewards for its most productive workers and business people.

Marx and Engels criticized excessive returns on capital; the Chinese government is striving to boost returns on foreign capital. Marx and Engels appealed to the workers to unite, whereas the Chinese government now is trying to prevent the uniting of workers—especially the 10 million who are either on furlough with subsistence wages or who have been laid off from state-owned enterprises.



Marx looked to China for solace in 1853, as revolution was fading in Europe. He predicted the imminent demise of the Qing Dynasty—59 years prematurely—and said that collapse in China would spark revolution in Europe.

"It may safely be argued that the Chinese revolution will throw the spark into the overloaded mine of the present industrial system and cause the explosion of the long-prepared general crisis, which, spreading abroad, will be closely followed by political revolution on the continent," Marx wrote.

Instead, China is trying to export industrial products, not revolution, to Europe these days. The "Communist Manifesto" has in many ways become a relic and a museum

piece. Under the guise of rejecting narrow-minded interpretations of Marx, President Jiang Zemin has embraced capitalist economic reforms including mergers and acquisitions, stock ownership, privatization, and worker layoffs—all measures Marx and Engels might have viewed dimly.

It is only the latest chapter in a history of adapting the "Communist Manifesto" to Chinese characteristics. The manifesto was first translated in part into Chinese in 1906. But the translator took some liberties. For example, the translator used the term "common people" instead of "workers," because largely rural China would have to rely on peasants to rise up against the imperial regime.

The historian Jonathan Spence has noted that the manifesto's classic conclusion was altered in the translation. The original read: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!"

The Chinese translation read: "Then the world will be for the common people, and the sounds of happiness will reach the deepest springs. Ah! Come! People of every land, how can you not be roused?"

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

09.10.1998

Princess Wijdan Ali

Art and diplomacy, perfect compatibility

By Anca de Maio
Special to The Star

FOR HRH Princess Wijdan Ali, a top-ranking modern artist and a personality of Jordanian diplomacy, art and politics are perfectly compatible. Academically trained in history and political sciences, as well as in Islamic art, she is not only the first woman to enter the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1962, and the current vice-president of the Institute of Diplomacy in Amman, but she is also a restless militant for the recognition of the contribution of Islamic culture and civilization to the world's patrimony.

In an interview given to *The Star*, Princess Wijdan Ali disclosed some thoughts of hers as a painter going through "a self-examination period", as a lecturer in love with teaching, as an Islamic art historian and volunteer promoter, as a diplomat and—last but not least—as a woman.

"I haven't been painting for quite a time," she said. "I felt I had to review my artwork and to think over what I really want from me as a modern Islamic artist," she explained. She has not been painting regularly for almost three years. She made it clear that painting sporadically is not a question of time but one of introspection and experiment.

To her, "painting is one form of self-expression." Her inclination for this form of expression can be traced back to her childhood. "As I had no sisters or brothers, I would spend hours drawing with coloured chalk on a small blackboard that seemed big to me at that time," she recalled. "I liked to draw birds," she said, adding that the game of wiping one drawing and doing a new one instead simply fascinated her.

Today a prominent representative of the contemporary calligraphic art school,

Princess Wijdan feels for the first time attracted to other plastic arts. "Maybe I will venture into ceramics and sculpture soon," she said. Inhibited by the cold weather, she confessed that she waited for the sunbeams of spring to start working again. In the meantime, she goes on with her work as vice-president and director of Research and Studies at the Institute of Diplomacy as well as with the multiple activities she has been carrying out as a president of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. A normal working day on Princess Wijdan's agenda starts at 8-8.30 am at her office at the Institute of Diplomacy. Research work, lectures, meetings are part of her fixed schedule. After 5 pm she habitually attends meetings with the committees she serves for voluntarily as well as openings of various cultural and artistic events. Her working day ends normally around 7.30 in the evening.

The author of a number of published books on Islamic art (*Introduction to Islamic Art*, 1988, *Contemporary Art From the Islamic World*, 1991, *What is Islamic Art?*, 1996, *Modern Art in Jordan*, 1996, *Modern Islamic Art: Developments and Continuity*, 1997), Princess Wijdan loves teaching her speciality: history of Islamic art and civilization. "Teaching is in my blood," she said. "I enjoy it very much."

With the teaching experience acquired at Yarmouk University, Al Bayt University and the Institute of Diplomacy, she lectures on current issues of Islam at a number of universities in Europe and the United States. Every year she gives summer courses of Islamic art and civilization



With Prince Hassan at an IRCICA meeting

at Complutense University in Spain. For instance, last December she attended a Euromed Civil Forum in Naples with a lecture on "Christians in Islamic civilizations."

The visiting scholar strives to demonstrate worldwide that the roots of human civilization are not Judeo-Christian alone but "Judeo-Christian-and-Islamic" and brings to the fore the "ignored tremendous impact of Islamic civilization on the Western one before and during the Renaissance." The West should not condemn Islam without going to the roots, the Princess said categorically. "The only way to counter the rampant Islamophobia in the world nourished by misconceptions and false stereotypes is to explain what our civilization means," she added. "Understanding and tolerance should prevail in our world whereby people accept and respect differences between them and learn to appreciate other cultures through their own aesthetics."

Furthermore, in order to concretely promote "Islamic art" (i.e. "the artistic manifestation created within a defined order and harmony by Muslim and non-Muslim artists according to Islamic aesthetics and principles for the spiritual, intellectual and physical benefit and enjoyment of Muslims") and cultural exchange, Princess Wijdan founded the Royal Society of Fine Arts in 1979 and established the National Art Gallery one year later. Ever since, she has been directly involved in chairing international seminars on Islamic art and in organizing exhibition exchanges, bringing foreign collections to Amman and sending local ones abroad.

An Islamic artist herself, Princess Wijdan considers herself a descendant of classical Islamic art. Among the artists with whom she shares certain affinities and for whom she has a particular consideration, there are three contemporary representatives of the calligraphic school (Egyptian Ahmed Mustafa and Iranians Zandardou and Tanavoli).

Beside such Western misconceptions attributed to the Islamic world as the belief that Islam is against figurative art, for example, Princess Wijdan also denounces other "stereotypes" related this time to women. She does not agree with the idea that it is more difficult for a woman to make her way through in an Islamic society than in a Western one. "In many Islamic countries from Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt to Bangladesh and Pakistan, women became diplomats and prime ministers long before Margaret Thatcher in Britain," she said. "In our society the problem is not Islam versus women, but women versus them-



At Complutense University, Escorial, Spain, at summer course lecture which the Princess delivered

selves," she continued, explaining that an educated woman has all the chances to fulfill her potential in an Islamic society.

In Princess Wijdan's case, academic training added to her inborn talent and doubled her professional satisfaction, without going against her fulfillment as a spouse and mother. Married to her cousin HRH Prince Ali Bin Nayef, she has three daughters and one son. "I have very good relationships with all of my children," she said, adding that this was undoubtedly a sign of successful motherhood.

In her free time, the Princess loves to go horse-back riding or to have long walks. She would like to have more time for reading (three to five hours daily) in order to keep abreast with the most recent bibliography in the fields of art and politics. ■

Israel signals readiness to leave South Lebanon

Continued from page 1

Lebanese territory along the length of their common border a "security zone" in June 1985. Israel has suggested it would consider withdrawing only if an outside peacekeeping force stepped in to safeguard the border from attacks, or as part of a comprehensive peace accord involving Syria and Lebanon. Top Israeli officials' recent remarks have dropped that formula.

The remarks come on the heels of the deadliest stretch of fighting in southern Lebanon since 1985. Last year, 39 Israeli soldiers were killed there. Four have died so far this year, including three when a Hezbollah mortar shell hit their position last week. Many more have been injured.

Israel inflicts even heavier casualties on the Hezbollah guerrillas and suspected allies in Lebanon.

Most analysts say Syria is the major obstacle to the kind of a resolution favored by Israel in southern Lebanon. It maintains 30,000 troops in Lebanon and is the major power broker there. Damascus is seeking the return of the Golan Heights, which Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war, and sees the resistance attacks in southern Lebanon as a means of exerting pressure on the Jewish state. Negotiations on the return of the Golan Heights broke down two years ago. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Midnight callers are not all friends

Continued from page 1

someone telling him that one of his daughters acted dishonorably. The father was outraged and took the caller seriously. Um Saeed said that such calls could easily destroy her family.

"There should be an end to such practices made by careless people who won't stop at nothing bothering people day and night," says Zaki Mak-

hamreh, a senior manager at Jordan Telecommunication Co. (JTC).

He offered hope to victims. He said they can fill a form permitting the JTC to monitor their line and trace abusers. Mr Makhamreh elaborated that people should state the kind of harassment they are subjected to and the company will take action.

He added that such abuse is responsible for many social

problems and culprits should be punished by law.

In most cases these turn out to be male teenagers who harass young girls or seek to establish a relation with them.

Abusers often dial a number at random hoping to hear a female voice and don't hang up. Then they try another number, and the same process goes on.

"Young men resort to such

acts because I think they don't know the proper way to spend their spare time," Dr Sari Nasser, a sociologist, said. But he stressed that nuisance calls are not unique to Jordan.

"The solution lies in providing youths with facilities and entertainment centers in order to invest their energy in a beneficial way that makes them forget about such trivial calls," Dr Nasser said.

Nuisance phone calls are

not restricted to households. They do occur at work and in many cases offenders make use of public phones where the phone company cannot identify callers.

Lately, complaints were made by official departments, mainly the Civil Defence, which received calls reporting false information about accidents, fires or casualties. Many calls of this kind are made through the recently introduced public phone service.

"Tracing public phones is very difficult if not impossible," Makhamreh said.

The procedure of wiretapping phones goes as follows: The phone is put under surveillance for a week, then if offenders are traced, the owner of the telephone line is given a first notice. If the disturbance continues the service is terminated and will be reconnected after a JD 15 fine is paid. For the third time the service is terminated for a month and is reconnected after a JD 25 fine is paid. If the phone harassment is repeated for the fourth time, the line is terminated for six months.

These penalties seem lenient since the problem has become worse in recent years. The problem for the phone company is to distinguish between the offender and the owner of the phone line.

Latest statistics provided by the JTC state that 33 phone lines were disconnected in 1997 compared to 23 in 1996. The number of wiretapped lines at owners request in Amman was 5322 in 1997 compared to 4427 lines in 1996. ■

The Star

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Officials attend Baqoura memorial ceremony

AMMAN (Star)—A memorial ceremony dedicated to the seven Israeli school girls shot a year ago by a Jordanian soldier was held on Monday in Baqoura. The ceremony was attended by Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and other officials and relatives of the slain girls.

On Behalf of His Majesty King Hussein, Prince Raad conveyed condolences to the families of the victims. "Though a year has passed, yet the sorrowful incident is still alive in our minds," the Prince said. "The visit of His Majesty King Hussein to the families of the victims following the incident is a clear token of His Majesty's feeling of shock for this incident which is alien to our society," Prince Raad said.

He added that "The peace treaty signed between our countries in 1994 is a firm proof of our sincere commitment towards a just and comprehensive peace in the region."

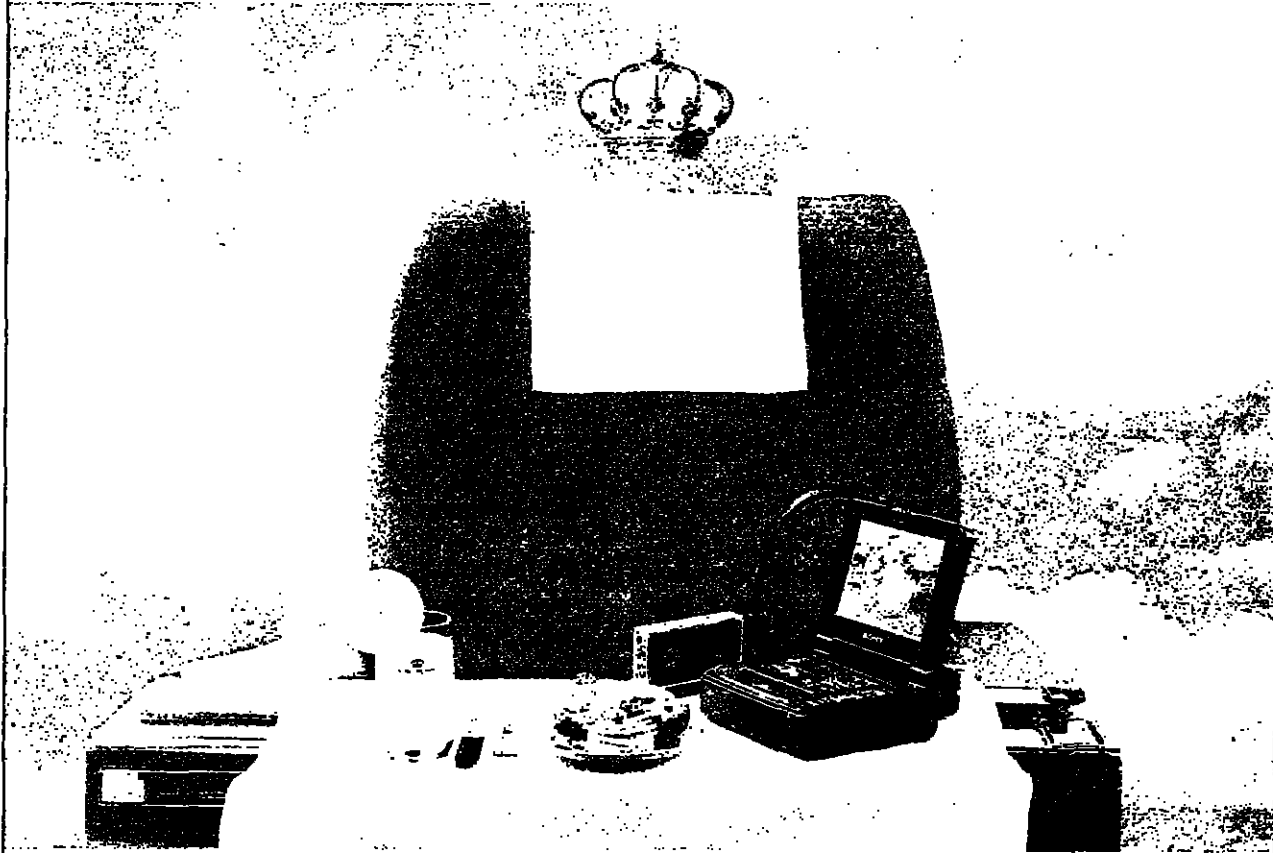
In his remark Netanyahu called for using this incident as an incentive to going ahead in

the peace process.

Speakers in the ceremony, particularly, the families of the victims, hailed the efforts carried out by King Hussein and His Royal Highness

Crown Prince Hassan to establish peace. They described His Majesty's visit for condolences as a token of King Hussein's genuine care in peace. ■

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Netanyahu's offer on Lebanon

Netanyahu's cards are easy to read. He does not want to talk to the Palestinians or the Syrians for fear that such talks will lead to territorial concessions at Israel's expense. But he wants to talk to the Lebanese because he knows he could not sustain more casualties in the security zone, which in recent years has become pretty insecure. Netanyahu is applying double standards—and that is to be understood. For the Syrians and the Lebanese, Netanyahu's gambit presents yet another dilemma that may yet prove noxious. ■

Solidarity with Jordan

Pierre G. Beauchois

Pierre G. Beautrais

Subscriptions: (annual) Jordan JD 20, Arab countries US\$ 100, W. Europe US\$ 200, USA & Canada US\$ 200.
Letters to the editor: Will be edited for brevity, must contain name and address of sender.

The adaptation of the local media provides interesting case studies. For one, adaptation means offering better service to local readers/viewers/consumers, etc... Its

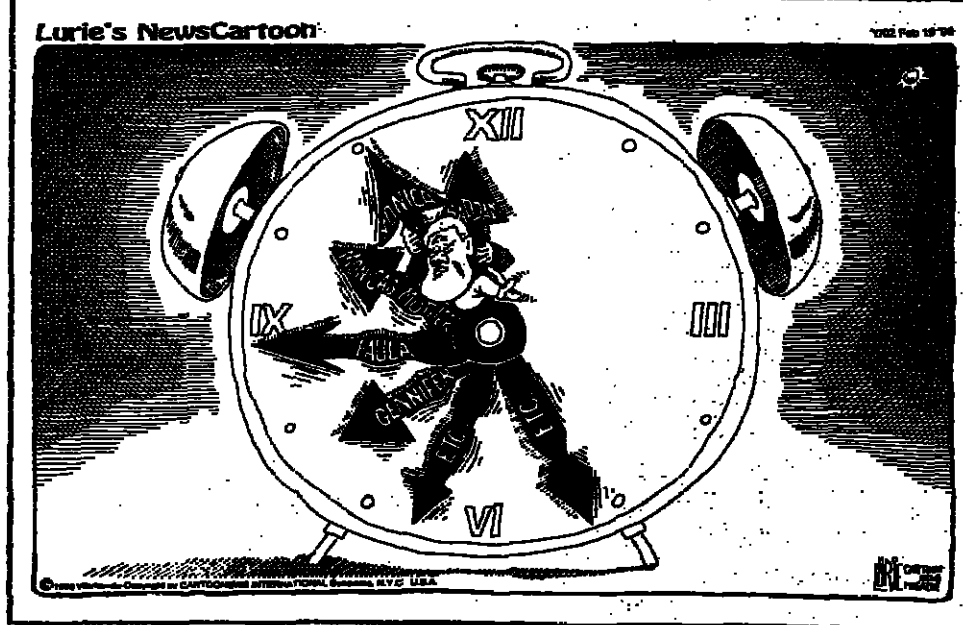
The information revolution will bring more challenges in the near future and political reform is the key word to adaptation and survival for local media. ■

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11

the next century. It is a mistake to keep relying on defunct collectives that are devoid of everything save an adjective or a label. ■



Business scene

The Red Sea Hotels, an affiliate of Zera Investment (holding) company has signed an agreement with the Saudi-based Bin Laden Company to build a Movenpick Hotel in Aqaba. The hotel which will be built on the north coast of Aqaba covers an area of 24 dunums. It comprises 270 rooms, a five-star suite, businessmen center and conferences room in addition to swimming pools and sports center. Total cost of the project is estimated at JD 25 million, and it will be completed in 24 months. The hotel will be directed by the international Swiss Movenpick Hotels and Resorts, which is also a holding management of Petra Movenpick and Movenpick Resort in the Dead Sea.

The services section recorded a noticeable growth in 1996, including energy, transport, tourism and real estate activities. Total earnings of 18 listed services companies in the regular markets reached JD 49.46 million. This shows an 8.9% growth, compared with 1995. The operational revenues of this sector totaled JD 217.78 million, compared with JD 190.16 million in 1995. Pre-tax profits were JD 20.81 million in 1996 against JD 22.34 million. Assets of the services sector rose by 11.45%, while shareholders rights went up by 11.95%, and net profits recorded an increase of 13.98%, compared with 1995 figures. Sectoral division shows that revenues in education came first, followed by hotels and tourism and energy.

The Dutch, Shell Oil Co. is studying economic feasibility of exploring oil shale in Jordan. The company estimated costs of extracting oil shale at \$10-11 per barrel, which is too low compared with the current oil prices at \$16-17 per barrel. However, former studies indicate that oil shale exploration is costly and could amount to about \$25 per barrel. Another Russian oil company says it could use its high-tech in oil and gas production to explore about 350,000 tons of oil shale annually. A high potential of oil shale is reported to exist in the southern part of Jordan.

Foreign Exchange
Wednesday, 4 MARCH

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7088	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
¥	0.4801	0.4825
HK\$	0.1227	0.1233
NT\$	0.5624	0.5652
₹	0.3667	0.3685
₪	0.0419	0.0421

Royal Jordanian leads new prosperous era

By Ihsan Sadiq
Star Staff Writer

THE AMBITIOUS program launched by Royal Jordanian (RJ), two years ago, reflect the airlines keenness to satisfy clients and offer quality service.

Referring to the latest improvements on RJ services, Vice President/Commercial, Dr. Majdi Sabri, says that the airline has embarked on a major program since early 1997 hoping to improve its services on ground and inflight. "The Royal Jordanian improvements started with the success of the city terminal project which enables passengers to finalize all check-in measures at the city terminal on the seventh circle," he maintains.

Such services are available at anytime during the 24 hours preceding the travelers' departure. Moreover, an advanced boarding system was introduced, as passengers can obtain their boarding passes at the RJ sales offices, before their flight. This is added to other special reservation facilities offered to RJ passengers.

Dr. Sabri explains that this reduces queuing and saves passengers' time, thus makes the trip much more easier and more comfortable.



Sabri

Also, First and Business Class passengers flying on RJ carriers enjoy all the above mentioned services, including reservation, and other check-in operations.

But this is not all. A special check-in lounge was opened at the Queen Alia International Airport for First and Business Classes passengers. "RJ staff lead the passengers to the CIP Lounges, while they take care of other arrangements including immigration, customs and luggage," Dr. Sabri elaborates.

The CIP languages are equipped with Fax, computer and Internet services to be at



the use of the clients.

The First and Business Classes check-in procedures are renovated and expanded for passengers. In other words you can say RJ services are second to none, in terms of high quality.

The latest addition to upgrade RJ services on board was the introduction of a new and ultramodern Personal Video System offered for the First and Business Classes passengers. It started in late January.

Dr. Sabri continues to explain the benefits of this unique service adding "this is available for flights on more than three-hour duration, where passengers can just use the personal video guide to choose any film from a selection of 15 of the latest international movies including 3 Arabic and 2 Indian."

It is seeking to comfort and entertain passengers who can

enjoy viewing the film at their convenience.

This is added to the main screen programs and the audio channels which are also available to make passengers enjoy a good and exciting trip.

The introduction of the new superior service "Crown Class" with the First Class services comes to culminate RJ's efforts to ensure a competitive position in the ever changing airline industry and provide the best and top services to satisfy passengers.

Launched on 1 March, "Crown Class" service is offered for travellers on the Far East, Europe, North America and the Indian sub-continent routes. The previous experience of offering the Super Business Class to North America, Far East, and the Indian Sub-Continent proved to be successful and reflected an increase of 20

percent in the total passengers using this service. The current First and Business Classes will be replaced with the new "Crown Class," which offers the First Class service but at Business Class fares," Dr. Sabri says.

RJ has enlarged the First Class cabin on Airbus A310 aircraft and added four more seats to make it more spacious, while maintaining the same First Class seats and pitch.

"Passengers will enjoy a wide variety of special services on ground and inflight. Also advanced boarding facilities will allow passengers to choose their favourite seats and receive their boarding passes 24 hours in advance.

A dedicated team is assigned to receive Crown Class passengers and are ready to arrange for their check-in procedures.

Air Canada reports record 1997 earnings

MONTREAL — For the year 1997, Air Canada reported its highest operating income and net income in the Corporation's 60-year history. The airline's operating income rose 14 per cent to \$443 million or 14 per cent to \$4.33 million on the basis of strong growth in passenger revenues, particularly transatlantic routes.

Operating expenses increased 12 per cent of \$539 million. Salaries and wages expenses rose \$84 million or 7 per cent. Excluding subsidiaries, the average number of employees during the year increased 7 per cent. Employees productivity, as measured by ASMs per employee, improved two per cent over 1996 while operating revenue per employee rose 11 per cent in 1997. Employee benefits expense declined \$26 million due to lower pension expenses as a result of favourable pension fund performance and revised pension assumptions.

The "Other" expense category increased \$187 million or 18 per cent due, in part, to increased operations as well as higher prices for suppliers services. Other increase were related to information technology projects and services and computer network operations. Higher provisions and legal settlements were also recorded in 1997. Subsidiaries' other expenses increased mainly due to costs associated with a labour disruption by Regional Airline pilots in the first quarter of 1997. The labour disruption adversely affected operating income by an estimated \$37 million.

Operating expense per available seat mile, excluding subsidiaries, rose five per cent in the year. Operating expense per ASM, net of non ASM producing activities, also increased five per cent. In 1997, Air Canada continued to diversify its transportation revenue base by expanding services in selected international markets while moderating its growth in domestic capacity. Fifty-five per cent of the Corporation's passenger revenue was derived from international markets as compared to 52 per cent in 1996. The Corporation capitalized units successful transborder expansion strategy by adding 10 new routes to the United States and expanding its code-

Arab Bank launches new Bond Fund

New product offers investors security, flexibility and potentially high returns

AMMAN (Star)—Arab Bank has launched a new Global Managed Bond Fund across the Middle East, which will provide investors with a relatively high level of security and potentially higher returns than savings and deposit accounts. Arab Bank believes that the new Fund is particularly timely, as investors traditionally prefer the security offered by bonds during times of market turbulence.

The Fund is being launched across the Middle East region and Cyprus as of 1st March, 1998, and follows the recently launched and highly successful Capital Guaranteed Fund, as Arab Bank seeks to build a wide portfolio of investment products for clients.

With a minimum investment level of US\$10,000, Arab Bank is aiming to make the Global Management Bond Fund accessible to a wide range of investors. The Fund is also designed to offer flexibility, with investors able to subscribe or redeem on a weekly basis. Investors will have the option of receiving a dividend pay-

ment normally twice a year or simply reinvest these dividends back into the Fund for capital appreciation purposes.

The subscription fee to the Fund will be waived for investors subscribing during the first month from the date of the launch. Focusing on quality bonds primarily from the G-10 countries, the new Global Management Bond Fund will offer investors a relatively low risk investment option.

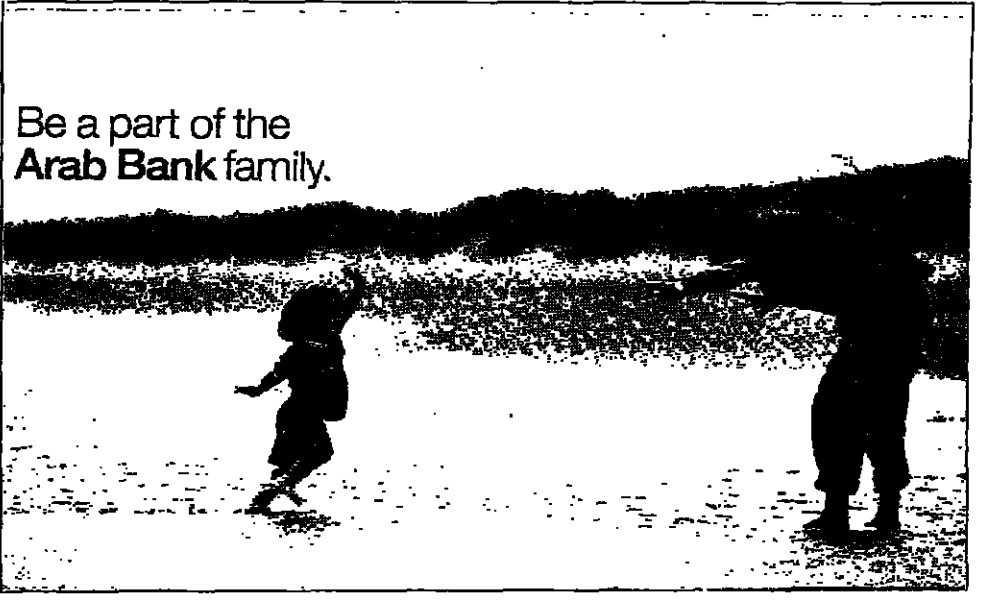
Commenting on the launch of the new product, Mr. Khalid Shomani, Deputy Chairman and President of Arab Bank said:

"The Global Managed Bond Fund supports Arab Bank's conservative and prudent investment philosophy. Bonds have traditionally offered security for investors, capital in periods of low inflation and declining short-term interest rates and we believe the Global Managed Bond Fund will capitalise on the continued low inflationary environment well into the medium term."

The Global Managed Bond Fund is the latest in a series of new products which will be launched in the Middle East, in our efforts to further develop the Bank's Personal and Private banking capabilities.

Full details of the Fund are available through Arab Bank's extensive branch network. In addition, Arab Bank's team of Investment Executives will be in major branch locations throughout the Middle East, to provide detailed information on the Fund.

Arab Bank is rapidly building a proven track record for investment management expertise. Both its Asean Growth Fund and existing AB International Bond Fund have won awards from the leading rating agency "Micropal". In the three years to 1 August 1997, the Asean Growth Fund was the top performing equity fund in its category, providing a cumulative return of 18.95% over three years during a difficult period for these markets, while the AB International Bond Fund has provided, on average, an 8.65% annual return since inception in November 1989. In addition, Arab Bank's Capital Guaranteed Fund launched in September



Be a part of the Arab Bank family.

ber 1997, attracted in excess of US\$100 million from investors. Arab Bank's investment philosophy based on approaching investment is underpinned by an analysis of economic and corporate fundamentals, conservatism and to providing investors with the product that is best suited to individual needs.

Relating to the Bank's Bonds are traditionally a preferred investment vehicle during periods of low inflation and declining interest rates. Arab Bank believes the current low inflationary environment in global markets will be sustained for the medium term.

Historically high quality bonds have consistently offered a 'safe haven' for investor's capital and therefore Arab Bank believes that the Global Management Bond Fund will offer investors a relatively secure investment option with the possibility of achieving a higher rate of return than more traditional deposit or savings accounts.

The Arab Bank Global Managed Bond Fund consists of quality minimum BBB rated bonds (Standard & Poor's equivalent) from G-10 countries to reduce the level of risk for investors.

Designed to be flexible, the Fund is open ended to enable investors to subscribe or redeem on a weekly basis. With

Business Chronicle

Sustainable growth, a way to minimize unemployment

A LATEST study concluded that there is a constant relationship between unemployment and crime. This implies that any increase in the number of jobless is undoubtedly followed by a reciprocal rise in criminal actions, mainly theft, fraud and money forgery.

Researcher, Tahir Jaradat from the Directorate of the Human Development of the Ministry of Planning pointed out that unemployment is negatively reflected on both social and economic safety in Jordan. The number of theft crimes over the last decade (1987-1996) recorded a sharp increase at 15.3% compared with a former annual rate registered in 1983-1996.

About 50 percent of those involved in robbery in 1996 were found to be jobless, while the previous rate was no more than 41.2 percent in 1992.

The researcher attributes this critical phenomenon to the economic crisis which marked the economy since late 1980s, followed by a wave of price hikes that left their negative impact since then.

What worsened the situation was the Second Gulf War and its consequences on the Kingdom.

Mr. Jaradat points out that if the process of human development in any society takes its right course, then definitely the level of crime will gradually shrink.

Offered a wide range of choices and job opportunities, people will be given the chance to increase their income and lead a decent way of living. This means that they shall be getting the proper education, training, nourishment, and as well receive the right health care.

However, the study indicates that in spite of the improvements in the standard of human development, the number of unemployed continues to rocket while the pockets of poverty also increase and even some suffer from malnourishment.

This raises a question on the nature and the course of the social and economic achievements. Certainly, there is an imbalance lying in the concept of human development.

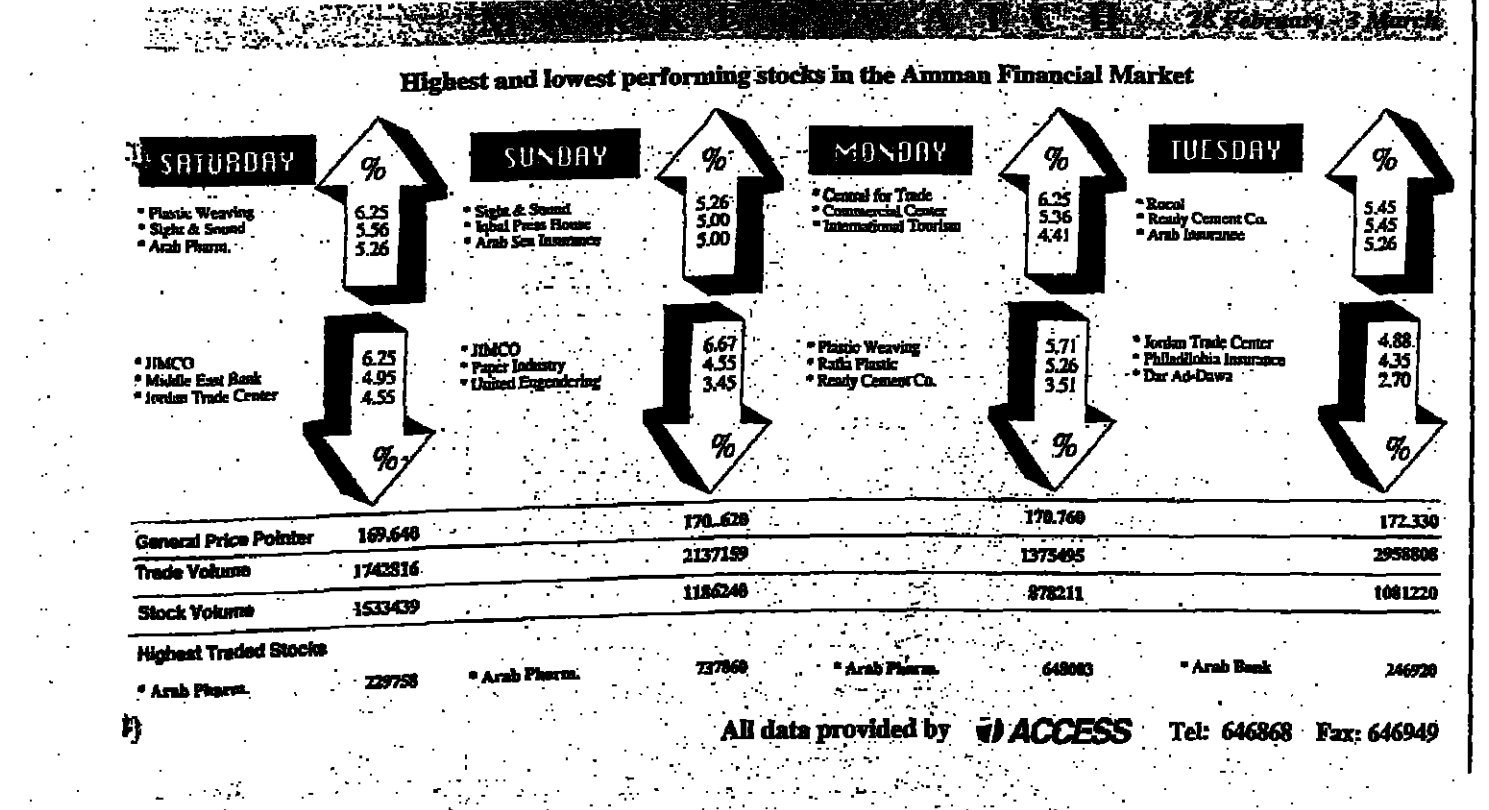
Any improvement should be positively reflected on people as all segments feel concrete evidence that their economy is flourishing. Hence, any figures stating that the situation is encouraging and that enormous achievements and growth rates were accomplished shall be meaningless, or misleading if no substantial solutions are reached to eliminate poverty and reduce unemployment.

Available figures on the size of crime in Jordan pointed out that 45823 crimes were registered in 1996, compared with 15242 in 1983. This implies that crimes recorded a rise of 200 percent, an annual increase of 8.8 percent compared with a 4.5 percent growth in population.

Mr. Jaradat's study reveals that the rise in the volume of crimes which is estimated at nearly double of the growth of the population, is a phenomenon that sends alarm bells and requires conducting a comprehensive study together with a review of some measures.

Though the rise in crimes differs from one year to the other, the upward trend seems to mark the time from 1983 to 1996.

On average, crimes reached their peak in 1990, 1991, in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis and the additional burdens the kingdom that was compelled to bear after the return of about more than 250,000 Jordanian employees from the Gulf.



Iraq

The war games

By Roula Khalaf

Que sera sera.
Whatever will be will be.
The future's not ours to see.
Que sera sera.
What will be will be.

OUTSIDE A photography studio, Iraqis dressed as rabbits and chickens were dancing. It was a marketing ploy, a last chance for family pictures, happy snaps, on the eve of war. The chicken flapped his wings and squawked, and the rabbit took passing children in his fake-fur arms and gave them a cuddle.

Not far away, I was sharing a meal with Doris Day in the El Milad restaurant. The apple pie accent was comforting. Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley were also performing in Baghdad last weekend, and young Iraqis were strutting about in the jeans they affectionately call "cowboy trousers."

At Baghdad University's English department, students were so eager to practise their second language that they were disappointed when a foreigner spoke to them in their native Arabic.

While Doris Day was singing in the twilight zone between peace and war, in a presidential palace not far away two men were having a conversation that would determine the immediate outcome of what seemed like the most important event in the final years of the millennium.

Kofi Annan, the gentle, charming, take-no-nonsense United Nations secretary general, was in the company of Saddam Hussein, who has spent much of his life at war. His presidential palace is an unusual, much-marbled building punctuated by four towers, each topped with a giant bust of Saddam.

At the moment of their meeting, the imminent war already had a name: Desert Thunder. It was really Operation Desert Storm II.

Television viewers in London and Washington were probably anticipating another season of extraordinary video footage perhaps with even clearer pre-impact pictures than the chilling coverage during the first war. And there would surely be military hardware to be unveiled on the battlefield and, at the very least, the smart bombs must be that much smarter.

The images of aircraft taking off and landing, and taking off and landing on flat-topped carriers, US and British, were already being screened back home, and the necessary preparatory work on the propaganda was in motion.

There was talk of a bacteriological (botulin toxin) attack on London, and suggestions that much of the world would be wiped out with anthrax. No one could be certain whether Saddam had the means to oversee the apocalyptic point of the halted UN inspections that prompted the conflict was to determine his capability to produce weapons of mass destruction.

So there were two distinct, bizarrely unrelated worlds that would only be joined in war, and one of them, Baghdad, seemed not to be fretting about it. Perhaps that impression was just another misunderstanding.

"We're used to war, wars have no reasons," said Fatima. "Aren't wars accidental?" She was an old lady leisurely shopping for food with her daughter in a Baghdad market. Perhaps she was too old to grasp what was going on. Perhaps she had seen it all too many times before.

After a few days in Baghdad, you do begin to lose track of time and space. Driving down the wide avenues, with palm trees lining the sides, the grey of the city and the angular architecture, the road seems to stretch endlessly into the distance. There are few curves in the harsh building outlines and not much happiness in the faces.

The day Kofi Annan arrived was that of the big bird market in Baghdad. Raising pigeons, my driver explained, is a hobby for delinquents who hang out on rooftops and peek at the neighbour's daughter.

Ghassan Youssef, who had worked as a technician fixing juicers, was about to part with his pigeons. "It's not the right time to have a hobby."

It was not a good day to be a seller. The pigeon traders explained that the customers were more scarce than usual; imminent war was bad for business.

But Baghdad is a city of markets where you don't easily get discouraged if you fail to sell. You turn up again next week and

have another try. Isolated and subject to rule by Saddam, Iraqis are understandably fatalistic. The state is staunchly secular, but people pepper their speech with references to God. And whether there would be war or peace depended solely on "God's wishes."

A country floating on oil, and the home of Arab literature and art of renown, has been running on empty. "Of course I had dreams," said a young soldier. "But I woke up to war and it's been war ever since." After eight years of war with Iran, there was the Gulf war, then uprisings in the

Whether there would be war was down, initially, to deciphering the wink and the nod. Last Saturday, the first day of formal talks, the meetings went on through the evening, but no one was quite sure whether this was a good or bad sign. What did Annan mean by "reasonable optimism?"

Talk of his "sacred duty" and "prayers" sounded like he was pleading a lost cause. His mandate, we were told, was "broad enough" but had "limited" room for a manoeuvre. When the US state department was condemning the "confrontational" statements of Iraq, journalists looked at each other in disbelief because, at that moment, Iraq was welcoming Annan and pledging co-operation.

When war was still a possibility, scenarios that seem bizarre in retrospect had a compelling logic. The press centre and coffee shop conversations were about the plans to dress as locals to escape Baghdad, or getting out of the country through a convoluted route.

Meanwhile, London and Washington were stressing that the Iraqi threat had not receded and access to the presidential sites, where biological and chemical weapons could have been stored, was crucial. If Saddam did allow access to those sites, it would be strange behaviour indeed to leave incriminating evidence lying around.

If the bombing did begin, the system of monitoring already established by the UN would be in danger. And if the weapons were there, a war might have unleashed them on the Iraqi population. Wars had not weakened Saddam Hussein's grip on power, and he probably had a sense that armed conflict would not be as clinical and clean as the UK and US would like.

And why would he want a war? Support for Iraq was spreading, and his own status had been enhanced. He liked the idea of being treated as a statesman and of having a photo session with Kofi Annan, who made a point of not smiling for the cameras.

But it was not until Sunday afternoon, when the words "on the verge of a breakthrough" were spoken that it seemed certain that an immediate war would be averted.

The journalists arriving in Baghdad that day were being asked by other journalists if they were disappointed. Not that they wanted a war, but they were mentally prepared for the ugliness of battle and, crass but true, peace was a story which would quickly slip from the front page. After the announcement, there were the predictable but limited celebrations by Iraqis outside the ministry of information.

"Is it war or peace?" asked the young women working at the ministry. They seemed to be more concerned at that moment about whether the decision would mean an influx or an exodus of journalists.

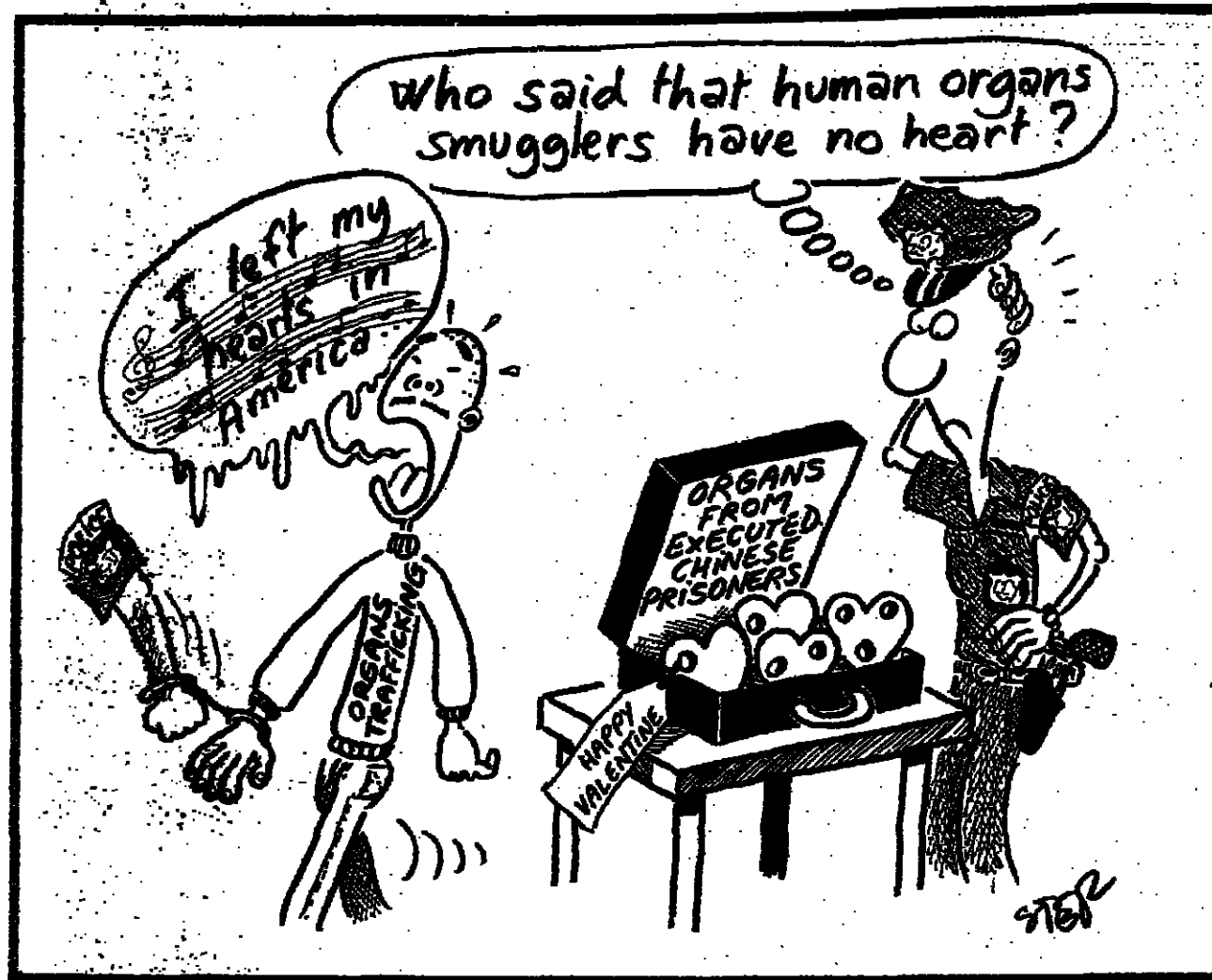
Having gone to Baghdad to witness history unfold over a weekend, we had to ask whether the events, and the interim outcome, were determined by the great man or created by the cock-up.

Kofi Annan slipped easily into the great man role, having intervened at the last moment and turned around events that seemed to be sliding inevitably towards military conflict. But the cock-ups were common enough, and one of them was the lack of a clear mission statement by Washington and London.

It really was difficult to figure out what the aim of an attack would be. And while Iraqis certainly had a Saddamised view of the outside world, the outside world was not united in its perception of Iraq. It was clear that US officials were uneasy that the tough action option was not about to be exercised, but most other diplomats were relieved that Baghdad was returning to its strange state of normal.

By midday on Monday, less than two hours after the announcement of an agreement for fresh inspections of the presidential sites, the lead item on the Iraqi radio news had already moved on. The big news in Baghdad was Saddam Hussein's letter of congratulations to the Sultan of Brunei in honour of his country's national day.

Financial Times Syndication



Analysis

Political Instability Looms for India

By Dexter Filkins

NEW DELHI—Hindu nationalists surged but fell short of a majority Tuesday in India's parliamentary elections; all but ensuring a failure of weak, unstable governments for this country of 970 million people.

The Bharatiya Janata Party, whose pro-Hindu agenda threatened to ignite ancient communal tensions, was certain to emerge as the largest party in parliament by the time all 500 million-plus votes are tallied.

Yet it was unclear Tuesday whether BJP leaders would be able to find enough partners to capture a majority in the 545-seat Lok Sabha—and whether they would be able to enact the more controversial elements of their sectarian agenda.

The Congress Party, which had ruled India for all but a few of the 50 years since independence, trailed, as did a third group, the United Front.

But together they threatened to challenge the BJP with a coalition government of their own. The BJP will likely get the first chance. Even if it can form a government, the fractured verdict delivered by Indian voters seemed likely to blunt the most divisive aspects of the party's plans, political analysts said. That is because many of the parties the BJP needs to form a government oppose key elements of its pro-Hindu agenda.

The drama will play out over the next 10 days, as the remaining votes are counted and the political horse-trading begins. As leaders of the major parties spent Tuesday predicting bright futures for themselves, many neutral observers said India was headed for months more of stalemate and political chaos. India, the world's largest democracy, has already had four governments in less than two years.

"We are entering a period of considerable uncertainty," said Rajni Kothari, director of the Center for the Study of Developing Societies in Delhi. "Whatever party takes power is likely to be weak, opportunistic and short-lived."

By late Tuesday, the BJP and its allies had won or were leading in 249 parliamentary districts, 24 shy of a majority; the Congress (I) Party had won or was leading in 166 districts; the United Front and other small parties had captured or were ahead in 121.

The BJP's victory brought to a close an extraordinary campaign that brought Hindu nationalists of the BJP as close as they have ever come to capturing a majority in parliament. A political power robed in the BJP shared by 85 percent of Indians, the BJP



Sonia Gandhi

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rode to prominence on a promise of clean government, untainted by the corruption and failure of its predecessors. The party and its popular leader—the donnish Atal Bihari Vajpayee—also pledged to scale back the country's 7-year-old economic liberalization, which has alienated many Indians.

But the BJP's most committed members also pushed an aggressive agenda designed to challenge the secular tradition of Indian politics and enshrine Hinduism as a virtual state religion. Many of their proposals seemed aimed directly at India's 100 million Muslims, and critics said the policies could reignite the communal

violence that has plagued this country for centuries.

Their more controversial proposals included a ban on slaughter of cows, considered holy by Hindus; the destruction of Muslim mosques, allegedly built atop Hindu temples centuries ago; and abolition of a separate code of family law for Muslims.

Just as the party seemed on the verge of capturing a majority, it was stopped by the astonishing entry of Sonia Gandhi into the campaign. Gandhi, the Italian-born widow of slain Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, crisscrossed India, warning vast crowds in her accented Hindi that BJP was a dark, divisive force.

"Sonia checkedmate the BJP," said Rajesh Pilot, a Congress Party Member of Parliament and a Cabinet minister in Gandhi's government. "She saved the Congress Party."

BJP leaders said they still hoped they could cobble together a majority by wooing smaller parties. They conceded, though, that they would probably be constrained from enacting all their proposals. "We will have to reach a consensus before we can act," said K.L. Sharma, a lawmaker and BJP spokesman.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service


<http://starlabia.com>

مكتبة

Madonna, only more so

By Robert Hilburn

HOLLYWOOD—If you've thought that Madonna has often seemed petulant and self-indulgent in her rise from sex goddess to media mogul, you're not alone. She thinks so too.

One reason her new "Ray of Light" is the most satisfying album of her career is that it reflects the soul-searching of a woman who is at a point in her life where she can look at herself with surprising candor and perspective.

In both her singing and writing on the album, which is due in stores Tuesday from Warner Bros. Records in association with her own Maverick Records, Madonna expresses herself so convincingly that you don't feel you are listening merely to the latest career reinvention of a master pop strategist.

"I traded fame for love, without a second thought," she sings in the opening lines of the album. "And now I find I've changed my mind."

In an interview, Madonna, 39, says that several experiences contributed to the tone of the album, which speaks about the importance of finding and nurturing love. But one factor stands out for the star of the film "Evita": her 16-month-old daughter, Lourdes Maria. "I feel like I'm starting my life all over in some ways," she says. "My daughter's birth was like a rebirth for me."

Madonna has no plans to marry the child's father, Carlos Leon, and is unsure whether she wants ever to marry anyone again. Her three-year marriage to actor Sean Penn ended in divorce in 1989. She would, however, like to have another child.

In the interview, Madonna talks about her music, her image and her baby.

Question: How much richer has your baby made your life? Answer: It's infinitely richer. Every day, I'm so excited to wake up in the morning and see my girl.

Q: Do you have a nickname for her?

A: Sure, Lola. ... Q: And does Lola get what ever Lola wants?

A: Nope (laughs). I do spoil her, but I have my boundaries. If she had her way, she'd be eating candy all day. She loves candy. She doesn't like playing with toys, but she loves taking the top off of every writing implement in my house and

drawing all over the walls. Unfortunately, all of my friends do spoil her when they come around. But what can you do?

Q: What do you think the baby will mean in terms of your career ambition?

A: You have different priorities. ... When my publicist says you have to do this and this, I go, "No, I don't," where I once would have done it all. Now, I'll say, "Cut everything in half."

Q: How do you think that'll translate in terms of future albums and films and tours?

A: It means I'm going to really have to pick and choose the things I do. My managers want me to go on tour for a year, but I just had to throw my head back and laugh because there's no way I'm going to do it. My lifestyle has changed immensely. Where I'm going to be and how much time I am with (the baby) is always going to come into the picture before I make any decision.

Q: Let's talk about the record. Do you feel critics have been guilty of reviewing your image at times rather than your music or acting?

A: Absolutely. I think that for many years now, people have been consumed with me—choices I've made, personally vs. my artistic contributions. It's like people act as if I'm the first one who tried to use image in rock 'n' roll.

When is it new for people to create a strong image? What about Mick Jagger? Prince? And you can go on and on. Besides, I feel that 50 percent of that image is what I put into it, and the rest is what others put into it.

Q: Your voice sounds truer on the new album than I remember from the earlier records. Do you think there's a difference?

A: Well, one thing that was the reason that I did for "Evita" was that I started working with a vocal coach and I suddenly discovered that I was only using half of my voice. Until then, I had pretty much



Madonna in Evita

accepted that I had a very limited range, which is fine. Anita O'Day and Edith Piaf had very limited ranges, too, and I am a big fan. So, I figured I'd make do with the best I had.

But then I realized I had to make some adjustments to sing those Andrew Lloyd Webber songs. I needed to increase my range. I did a lot of work with an incredible coach and on top of that I've been practicing yoga very seriously for a little over a year and I believe that helped my voice and affected my singing.

Q: What about the album's themes? They seem more personal than before. Are they or are you just expressing yourself better now?

A: I feel it's probably a combination of the two. I've written lyrics that were quite personal before, certainly in the "Like a Prayer" album, and even stuff on "Bedtime Stories" felt very

personal. But perhaps I was in a much more vulnerable place when I was recording this album and because I feel I've done a lot of growing and evolving spiritually and emotionally.

Q: Is there a reason you were more vulnerable?

A: First of all, it was after doing "Evita," which was really a challenging, emotionally exhausting, soul-searching couple of years for me. It also kind of gave me time off from being me.

Q: You mean you were thinking about the role and the woman herself?

A: Exactly. And I got to view myself in a more objective way, and also I got a new birth and being responsible for another life put me in a different place, a place I'd never been before.

I think I'm slowly shedding

my layers, and where other people have been obsessed with the idea that I am always reinventing myself, I'd rather think that I'm slowly revealing myself, my true nature. It feels to me like I'm just getting closer to the core of who I really am.

Q: The final element of the album is the overall sound, the slight techno touches. Why did you have British dance producer William Orbit produce your album?

A: I've always been interested in electronic, techno, trip-hop, that kind of music. The thing that bothered me about a lot of that music, though, was it seemed devoid of emotion. There wasn't a lot that felt personal. So I wanted to take my feelings and marry them to something that is traditionally not considered very emotional or personal.

Q: Didn't you approach some other techno or dance producers and get turned down?

A: I went through Tricky and Goldie and Prodigy, who is even on Maverick, and they all basically turned their elitist noses at me and said, "Oh, we can't work with you. You're a big pop star." (Maverick executive Guy Oseary) suggested William, who had done some remixes of my records, and he sent over some stuff he had been working on and it was absolutely the direction I wanted to go.

Q: How about your film career? How pleased were you with the "Evita" experience?

A: Very pleased. It was very fulfilling on every level. In the end, it was great being able to learn to sing that score, and it was great working with (director) Alan Parker and (actors) Jonathan Pryce and Antonio Banderas. It was also great learning about this incredible woman.

Q: What film are you doing next?

A: I'm supposed to be doing a movie called "Recycle Hazard." It's a true story, set in the South, very Tennessee Williams-esque. It's a beautifully written story. We are trying to find a director right now. ... After that, I plan to go on tour, which will take me to the end of the year. Then I'll do (the film) "Chicago" with Goldie Hawn and director Nicholas Hytner.

Q: Finally, what about the future? Do you think you ever want to get married again?

A: Marriage? I don't know what I really think about marriage. I'm a bit confused on that issue.

Q: But more children?

A: Oh, yes. I would love to have a brother or sister for Lola. I don't know when, but it'll happen. ... There's a song on the album called "Nothing Really Matters," and it was very much inspired by my daughter. It's just about realizing that when the day is done the most important thing is loving people and sharing love, so of course I want more of that love in my life. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Lexus keeps up with the Benzes



Lexus RX300

By Paul Dean

YOU HAVE broken into the penny jar, downsized family allowances, and hired out grandma as an apprentice weed whacker with Hector's Yard Service. Eighteen thousand, nineteen thousand, nineteen five ... dammit, you still don't have enough for a Mercedes-Benz ML320 sport-utility vehicle.

But even with cash money in mitt, right now, with a bottle of Tullamore Dew for the sales manager, you'd still be low man on a waiting list that could stretch to next year. And then the only available color will be Misty Egyptian.

Be not bereft. Now—as there long has been for those with credit ratings \$1.95 short of qualifying for a German luxury car—there is Lexus.

Specifically, there is the 1999 RX300 sport-utility, which—in terms of quiet capability, relaxed ride and quality of appointments—is a precise understudy for the near-perfect ML320. In fact, if someone swapped grilles and logos during the night, you'd probably step into the wrong vehicle come morning. Both are 15-footers with four doors and space for one driver and four passengers. Headlights have an extraterrestrial squint, and the smoked glass rear-ends suggest something added after designers signed off the original shape.

They are raked, rounded, flared and sloped in almost the same places. Neither is a reconfigured truck or rebadged version of somebody else's off-road wagon. They weigh just more than 4,000 pounds apiece, and their V-6 engines put out more than 200 horsepower. Both ride on independent suspensions, front and rear, and serious, five-spoke 16-inch alloy wheels.

Each comes with side air bags and more sophisticated, crash-absorbing crush zones—a definite plus for any little guy hit by your heavier, higher vehicle.

And interiors of the Lexus and Mercedes are rich with soft leathers, deep, sparkling woods and the elegant ethos of Ethan Allen.

Actually, as a prescription for easing the exquisite pain of choosing between a pair of grand vehicles, the RX300 is a little stronger in several critical areas than the ML320. There's the major matter of price, with

the Lexus several thousand dollars less expensive than the Mercedes. The RX300 delivers 19 mpg in town and 24 mpg cruising between towns, about 15 percent better gas mileage than the ML320.

To give the Mercedes its due, the M-B sport-utility carries all the distinction of the marque and certainly the wheels to be seen in this season. It has greater ground clearance, carries more cargo and will tow 5,000 pounds compared with 3,500 pounds for the Asian.

Although not designed for adventure tours across the Serengeti, the Mercedes will go sludge-splashing and stump-hopping with more grit and grip than the Lexus.

That's because it has genuine four-wheel drive, with a transfer case and a set of low gears should viscosity get really vile.

In contrast, the RX300 has all-wheel drive for bad weather, not four-wheel drive for arroyos and gullies miles from the nearest Stuckey's. Lexus offers a two-wheel-drive model, while Mercedes does not.

All of which makes the Lexus a direct, welcome concession to the huge majority of sport-utility owners who never take their vehicles off-road, but want the tough look, high ride and large interior capacity. The

RX300 supplies all that, without the weight, expense or heavy growling of pure four-wheel drive.

As Lexus chief engineer Tsuneo Uchimoto explained when the vehicle was introduced, "We didn't think about extremes. We didn't think about rock climbing. We did think about snowy roads and sandy beaches."

With bits and pieces borrowed from the Lexus GS300 and Toyota Camry (chiefly, the 3.0-liter, 230-horsepower engine, subframe, suspension, steering and gearbox), the RX300 is predictably quiet and smooth on dry days and standard highway surfaces.

It's also an urgent little rascal. Maybe too urgent.

Our front-drive, two-wheel-drive test car did the 0-to-60-mph gallop in 8.6 seconds. That's really quick among sport-utes with price tags hovering around \$35,000. But under that kind of pressure, even on dry pavement, torque steer is quite noticeable. In the wet, movement is amplified into front-wheel flutters that require precise steering maneuvers to keep the vehicle somewhere between whoops and whee. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Cigars

A leaf from the smoker who doesn't inhale

By Frank Gray

IT MUST be one of the supreme ironies of the last half of the 1990s that the hand-made cigar trade should be flourishing as never before in the face of huge pressure to curb the advertising and promotion of smoking.

We have seen golden times before. Around the time of Big Bang, the yuppie-dom rampant in the City of London in the 1980s, there was a shift in cigar consumption from retired colonels to Britain's financial young bloods. The recession that followed put paid to that boomlet.

But this time round, despite bank mergers and health warnings, the rush may last for the simple reason that, as a luxury habit, cigar smoking has turned into a phenomenal craze. Cigars are being fished in many magazines such as the New York-based Cigar Aficionado; once-empty humidors at airports are now beginning to fill up.

The British Airports Authority is preparing to expand its humidifier facilities at Heathrow next month. The redesign will incorporate a "contemporary Art Deco" motif, which somehow will include room for "reclaimed Rhodesian red teak parquet," says the authority.

The cigar trade even made it to British television on Christmas day when BBC2 devoted an hour to the history of the Havana cigar, which is tantamount to a history of Cuba (including rare footage of the young Fidel Castro speaking English rather well).

In the UK, importers say sales of hand-made cigars have bounced back from a low of about 3m-4m in 1992, and are now pushing 6m. You don't have to look too closely inside a merchant's humidor to see that Havanas and other exotica from the Caribbean are taking up roughly equal shelf space.

Cuban output slipped sharply over the decade, hitting 50m several years ago, but, says Habana SA, it is now bouncing back and the country is aiming to produce 200m by 2000, roughly in line with Dominican and Honduran producers. Cigar merchant J.J. Fox recently took the bold step of introducing its own brand, made of 100 per cent Dominican tobacco, supplied by the Valdivia Cigar company, an independent importer.

But the Cubans have responded to such "foreign" incursions with the rediscovery of a 19th century style, the torpedo-shaped figurado, sealed at both ends, which is being exported under the new "Cuba" brand name. Watch out, too, for Cuba's new Trinidad cigar, which some say is better than the Cohiba, Cuba's so-called "national" (but in my view disappointing) cigar.

Where the boom is greatest is in the US. No Cuban cigars have been imported there since the 1961 US trade embargo which followed the Cuban revolution. Imports of hand-made cigars into the US had been languishing at five figures throughout the 1980s, but galloped to 180m by 1995 and 296m in 1996. Total cigar sales have been put at \$1.6bn in 1996, of which \$800m was spent on the so-called premium cigars.

In the US, though, the health police are not far away. A US Federal Trade Commission crackdown on cigar advertising is imminent, as is a US Surgeon General's health warning to appear on cigar packaging, already widely in evidence in the cigar trade abroad.

Manufacturers and wholesalers argue that cigars are fundamentally different from cigarettes, despite being much stronger. "Smoke less, but stronger," says Davidoff, "smoke the best." Furthermore, don't inhale: it ruins your capacity to enjoy the aroma.

The creation of e-mail facilities and websites has added to the boom: buyers and sellers are now placing orders on screen. This has speeded up the mail order business and broadened the concept of what makes a good cigar.

For example, a colleague recently visited San Francisco and returned with an exquisite supply of cigars from a Fisherman's Wharf merchant named Stiles Stogies Inc. Could these be 100 per cent Cubans that had slipped through the net, I asked myself after smoking one.

A website query elicited the response that, no, the cigars from the firm's Premium Two Year Collection contained leaf of three distinct nationalities: filler (the core leaf) from the Dominican Republic; binder (the second layer) from Nicaragua; then wrapper (the outside leaf whose quality will make or break a cigar) from Sumatra.

A pleasant result of officialdom's "downer" on smoking has been the emergence of the smoking-bar, club and even more salubrious "divan"—a place where a customer can dine, smoke and even store his cigars. One of the newest of these in London is the recently opened (and unashamedly named) No. 1 Cigar Club of London at No 1 Percy Street.

Older establishments include Boisdales in Belgrave and the Monte's/Havana Club on Sloane Street. There is also the Scott's Restaurant Cigar Bar and the newly opened Little Havana off Leicester Square. Dunhills on Duke Street recently refurbished its capacious and leathery humidor and smoking room, the largest in the UK.

I travel to Asia frequently, and have been surprised at the speed with which the region has developed into a significant new market, largely thanks to the efforts of the Pacific Cigar Co (PCC) in Hong Kong,

jointly owned by Habana S.A. and David Tang, the entrepreneurial retailer.

Its key baitwick is the Cohiba Cigar Divan in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Last September, the divan marked its fifth anniversary. With the best cigar supplies in Asia, it is well established as a home-from-home for visiting enthusiasts. At the end of last year, a second such divan opened in the Sheraton Kowloon Hotel.

Eric Piras, PCC business development manager, told me recently he conducts smoke-ins at top hotels in Asia on the finer points of cigar service. "We show staff how to select cigars for their customers, how to cut them, how to light them. We have cigar seminars, cigar dinners and even invite rollers from Havana to show them how it is done."

He is not alone, for Davidoff et Cie, one of the most famous names in cigars and whose stock comes from the Dominican Republic, does the same. In Singapore, Paul Pang, manager of the Davidoff shop on Orchard Road, told me last month that sales in the city have soared by 400 per cent in the past two years.

"Despite what you hear, Singapore is a place where people can easily enjoy a cigar," says Pang. "We are a cosmopolitan city, young people in business travel a lot and pick up tips on life styles. Don't forget, most companies in Singapore are foreign-owned."

Indeed, Singapore has numerous divans, including the Havana Club in the Marriott Hotel and several others at the quayside cafes in the financial district where I was reminded how pleasant it was to smoke a good cigar outdoors in a tropical climate be it in Asia or the Caribbean. ■

Financial Times Syndications



Elephant seals on a beach near San Simeon in California. photo by Don Kelsen.



Protecting at the environment

TWO ENVIRONMENT lectures were given at the Hotel InterContinental Jordan. The aim was to make the Hotel Staff aware of environmental issues and how to protect our environment. The lectures were given by Mr Ahmed Kofe and Mr Mahmoud Al Omari who explained the environmental problems facing our planet and advised the staff on how to protect the environment. One of the topics discussed was water conservation.

Hotel InterContinental is always keen on raising awareness among its staff and the community of the importance of this issue. ■



Small but wonderful

Unique library for a musical ear

By Marwan Asmar
Star Staff Writer

A library is like a kingdom. It is a linchpin of a nation's identity. That's why throughout the world, libraries are viewed with reverence not only by academics and lame-ear intellectuals but also by politicians, businessmen and ordinary people from all walks of life. In a phrase, libraries are an interactive source of cultural dynamic.

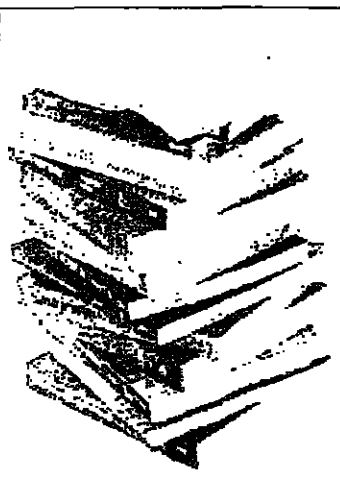
Jordan has its fair share of libraries that cater for the reading public. While these should increase in numbers, especially around the Kingdom, nevertheless, it is considered that the existing libraries in this country represent a good size. If you take into account the size of the reading public which is sadly not a great deal.

But still there are strives and individual efforts that are being made. There is for instance a not inconsiderable number of institutions that do have libraries. These tend to be for the members that work in them, and generally not for the public. Examples include banks, chambers of commerce, schools, universities, ministries and so on.

But would you believe that there is a music library in Amman, dedicated to young musicians. The library is part of the National Music Conservatory, and has developed haphazardly since 1986.

However, since 1995 there began a concerted effort to systematize and categorize the musical note books that are available.

Work is still going on. Librarian Inssaf Issa, says "We don't really know how many note books that have been collected over the years, but we estimate that there is well over 1000 musical books."



"At the moment, we have brought a professional from outside to categorize the books. Halfa Shariha is responsible for categorizing all these," Assistant Librarian, Munna Al Khalayli says pointing to the bookshelves.

But this is half the story. "Now we are in the middle of revamping the library, we are putting hard covers on all these books in order to protect them," Ms Issa adds.

And there are note books for every musical instrument you can think of, and this is not surprising because all what is around is used by both teachers and students of the Conservatory. Despite its one-room size, this is very much your typical run of the mill teaching library. What you see are for the students.

"There are notes for all types of music," Ms Al Khalayli suggests. "Of the string instruments, we have notes for the violin, viola, double bass and cello." But that's not all.

"In the wind instrument section we have also note books for the flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, saxophone and piccolo, while the brass section contains the trumpet, trombone, French horn and the tuba," Ms Issa continues.

This is not to mention that the library has notes for the guitar and piano. But the library becomes even more rounded when Ms Issa says that there are notes for such famous Arabic musical instruments such as the *qanoun*, *oud* and the *nay*.

And in this respect also, there are books on the history of Arabic music and for famous musicians as Riyad Al Sunbatti, Mohammad Abdel Wahab and Sayed Darweesh, who are of course as everybody knows, are all from Egypt. However, I am told that the last is the father of Egyptian music.



"We even have encyclopaedias on Arabic music, in addition of course to the Syrian *Musashat*, Ms Al Khalayli, who is an engineer by training, but eventually turned to music, says.

The NMC has developed into a rigorous teaching musical institution in this country. It teaches its students over a relatively long period—basically alongside the school years and up to university levels—chamber music, theory and musical appreciation. And these tend to be geared towards western classical music that include such famous greats as Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, and Handel.

There are of course set exams at the end of the year, and this is something that means musical notes have to be constantly updated and renewed. Although some of these are notes given through donations, a great deal has to be bought. "It can be an expensive business ranging

from 2 dollars to 200. What is not realized is that you have to buy for the whole orchestra, and that of course adds greatly to the cost," Ms Issa says.

But plowing on is the name of the game. The library's notebooks are not from a single depository but from different sources. It is not uncommon to see notes from English, French, Russian and Hungarian sources.

The music library also has an extensive audio visual section, which is again very much part of the training of students and enable them to develop the right musical ear. And lastly as they say, a library wouldn't be a library without its access to periodicals. The NMC has on its shelves the latest *Instrumentalist* is combined with *Music Educators*, *Interlochen* and *Electronic Musician*. ■

Constellation, my choice

OMEGA launches its 150th anniversary in India with Cindy Crawford

AS ONE of the Indian newspapers reported, "Cindy Crawford conquered hearts with her smile." This was the first time the 20th century Renaissance woman visited India for OMEGA, and the experience was fascinating. Cindy was in both Bombay and New Delhi, in January 24th and 25th, to launch the watch she helped create—the Constellation My Choice—and to inaugurate OMEGA's 150th Anniversary celebration.

In two different press conferences held in Bombay and in New Delhi, Cindy answered questions about her life and career, and expressed the desire "to be with OMEGA even when my modelling career is over." She is very proud of the My Choice watch she helped design and was satisfied with the enthusiastic response of retailers and consumers. Cindy spoke also about her active involvement in charity, and was thrilled with OMEGA's donation of \$30,000 to Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity and the contribution of \$15,000 to the Archaeological Survey of India for the maintenance of Janari Mantar—India's first observatory and historical symbol of Time and excellence.

During a luncheon in Bombay hosted by Mr Kishor Mehta, Chairman of the Group Beautiful, one of OMEGA's agents in



India, Cindy Crawford met eminent Indian politicians, personalities from the business world and India's first cosmonaut Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma. A painting by one of India's most famous spiritual painters Udayraj Gadnis, given to the OMEGA management by Group Beautiful on the occasion of the brand's 150th anniversary, was unveiled by OMEGA's

ambassador. After the luncheon, she presented a Constellation My Choice watch to the reigning Miss World, Diana Hayden.

In the afternoon in Bombay, Cindy Crawford visited the OMEGA shop Beautiful Boulevard where she was eagerly greeted by the Indian crowds. She also received an extraordinary diamond necklace and earrings from Mr Mehta.

On a visit to the National Institute of Fashion Technology (where OMEGA has instituted a fellowship for excellence in fashion design and marketing) Cindy asked the NIFT students to "work hard to achieve their dreams. It takes four things, creativity, discipline, commitment and lots and lots of hard work to achieve success." The students had created a beautiful dress for Cindy which she graciously received. The chairman of NIFT offered Cindy a bouquet of 150 roses on the occasion of OMEGA's 150th Anniversary.

The India events were highly successful for OMEGA and should lead to an even more positive response by the Indian consumer. As Mr Sofisti said that "We are already one of the leading watch brands in India, but we can do more. We believe very much in this nation, and launching our anniversary and a special watch here is a clear indication of our goals." ■



French fashion at Kookai's

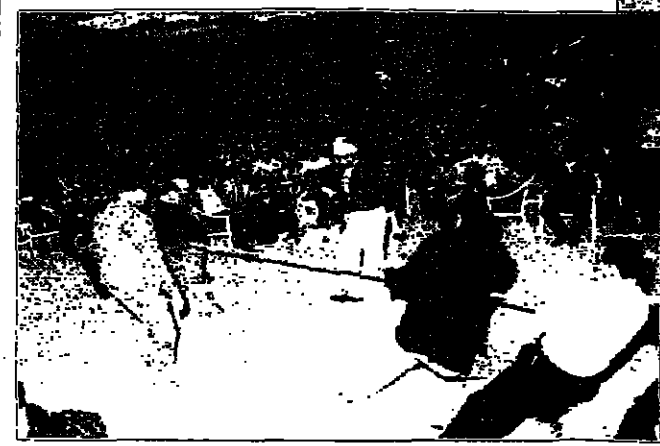
KOOKAI, THE newest fashion shop in town opened its doors earlier this week. Kookai is displaying the latest in French fashion design. Only the very best in women's wear is being glamorously shown at the shop in Amman. The Prime Minister's spouse.

Mrs Najali, who opened the shop, expressed her admiration for the top French wear. General Manager of Kookai's, Mr Majdi Shawrab said that his design shop is presenting the best at competitive prices. Kookai's is situated in Shmeislan. ■

MS & MR Hotel InterContinental Jordan for the year 1998

THE STAFF at the Hotel InterContinental Jordan had their annual staff party. During the Party Ms Rula Khulaf was chosen as Ms Hotel InterContinental Jordan. Mr Awad Ghandi was chosen as Mr Hotel InterContinental Jordan. The two employees were chosen after answering different questions in the area of "Commitment to Excellence," "Positive Attitude," "Good Personal Presentation" and "General Knowledge."

It was a very difficult task for the judges to choose only two from the very qualified employees of the Hotel. ■



...Fun evening

THE STAFF at Hotel InterContinental Jordan had their annual staff party. The staff enjoyed the music of the live band and fun games. Lots of prizes were won.

This is an annual event organised by the management of the Hotel to keep the family spirit going between the staff and to show appreciation for the good work they do throughout the year.

During the party Mr Khaled Zater, Senior Supervisor in charge of House Keeping was chosen as employee of the year together with Mr Mohamed Hourani, Attendant of the Outside Laundry Shop at the Hotel. ■

Unique award KLM And Northwest '1997 Airlines of the Year'

ALLIANCE PARTNER KLM and Northwest Airlines were selected as co-winners of the Air Transport World Magazine "Airlines of the Year" Award for 1997 at the beginning of this week. This is only the second time in nearly 25 years that the editors of the world's leading aviation industry magazine have selected two winners for this prestigious award, viewed by the industry as the world's highest ranking recognition.

KLM and Northwest are excited and honoured to be recognized with the award. It is the first time in the award's history that it has been given to an alliance, and they view it as a recognition of their pioneering work in building a global airline alliance.

In their announcement, the editors of Air Transport World Magazine state that the KLM-Northwest Alliance has "spawned a host of imitators" and that "simply stated, Northwest and KLM have transformed the very structure of

the airline industry." They further honour KLM and Northwest as "two airlines worthy of being recognized for their individual accomplishments," since they have not only changed the industry, but also "done it as highly successful, well-regarded airlines."

KLM has been recognized as Airline of the Year on one previous occasion, in 1985. In the preceding year, KLM was distinguished with the Passenger Service Award, and in 1976 with the Award for Cargo Development.

Northwest Airlines has been recognized on three occasions, in 1976 for Cargo, in 1984 for Financial Management and in 1985 for Technological Management.

The Awards will be presented to the President of KLM and Northwest on February 23rd, at a Gala Awards Dinner in Singapore on the eve of "Asia Aerospace '98," the Singapore Air Show. ■

SCRAPBOOK

By Christian Dozant

Time to say goodbye

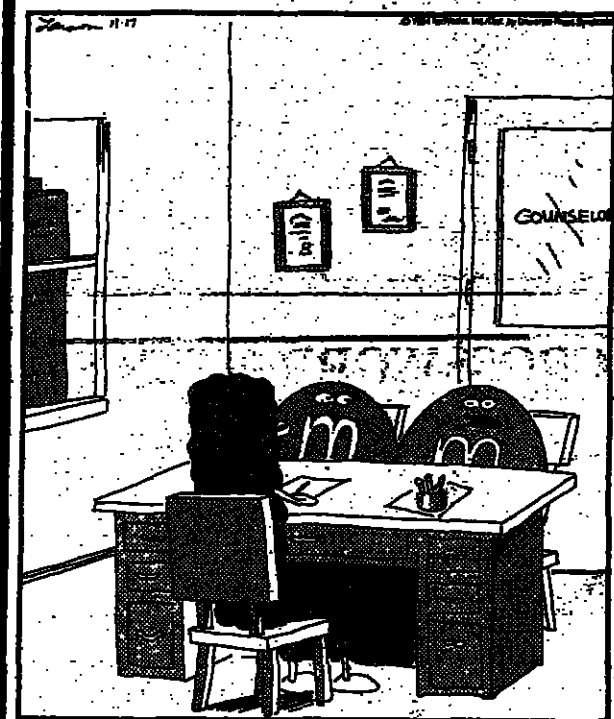
WE LIVE in a vale of solitude made bearable by friendship. But the problem with friends is that they move away, leaving deep indentations in our defenses against the world's legions of arrogance and sorrows.

New technologies among them the internet and e-mail and the egotism of materialism have put an end to friendship. The first through speeding up the tempo of human communication to the point where no one is indispensable and the second by emphasizing whatever is fundamentally selfish and nasty in people, so that we are unkind about our friends because of something which is rotting in ourselves. Although, making friends becomes more difficult with age as new ones are hard to come by, there are times however, where there is an unexpected stroke of luck when a new friendship which acquires instant maturity is made. This happened to me last year when I met Mariella Hainault—a descendant of Philippa of Hainault who lived at the court and later married Edward III (1327-1377). A formidable young man, Edward pursued his claim to the French throne, winning in 1346 the Battle of Crecy and provoking the Hundred Year's War.

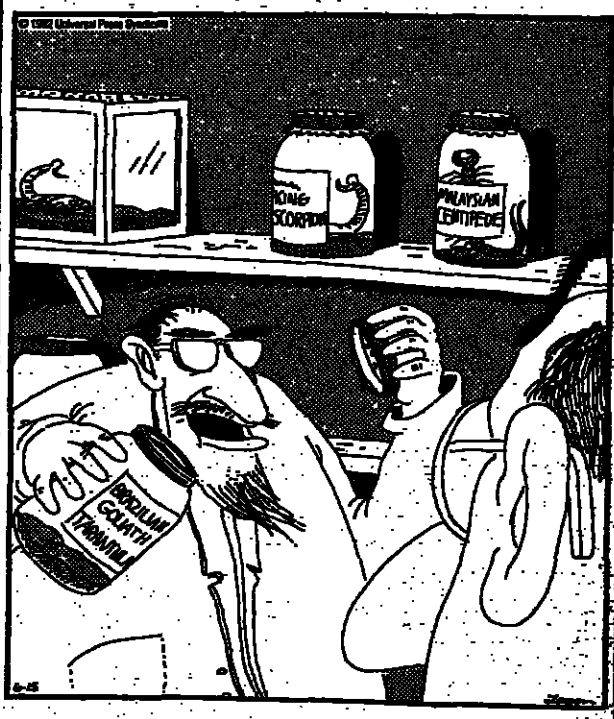
After an uneventful stint in Amman, Mariella returned to France last summer where she has found love and happiness. I last saw her in Paris in September. I had taken an early train from Rocamadour and she met us at Austerlitz early one morning. We had lunch and then she insisted on driving us to Charles de Gaulle's airport.

It happened again last month when Marie Helene Chastaney came from Montreal to visit her sister Chantal—who incidentally will also be leaving soon for Hong Kong. Despite the disparity in age and generation gap she was a delightful person to be with. More than a gift, she had a genius for friendship. Her mind was full of treasures and she struck the perfect balance between being a good listener and a good talker. She made shrewd reflections on literature, love and relationships. Jungian psychology and so much more. Marie Helene was strikingly beautiful. To list all her virtues and qualities may not quite convey the person. There was something else—a certain charisma, perhaps a metaphysical factor which lifted her over all of us. ■

THE FAIRSIDE



"Look, marriage is OK—but I also want my own identity. ... I mean, how would you like it if everyone referred to you as 'Chocolate Bar and Chocolate Bar'?"



"There you are, my darling ... Rawlings! Don't move!"

SLAPSTIX
Dwell on the past, and you'll lose an eye.
Forget the past and you'll lose both eyes.

Handwritten signature or text in Arabic script.

The Star's Guide

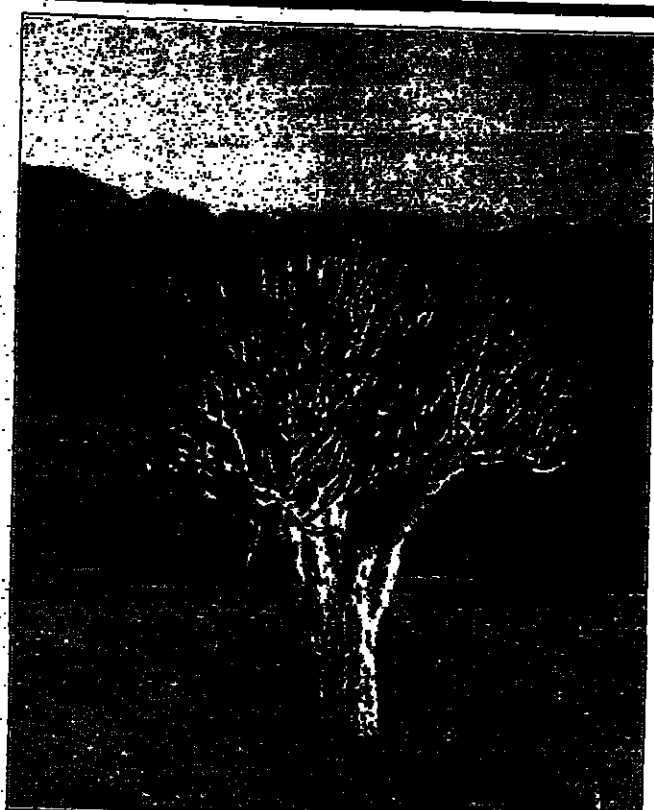
Programs on JTV from 7-13 March

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—The Hammerman
 4:30—French Program
 5:00—Cannon The Adventurer
 6:00—Square One
 6:30—Neighbours
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—Discovering Magazine
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—You Bet Your Life
 8:00—Cinema, Cinema
 8:30—Prism
 9:10—Time Trax
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Feature Film
 12:00—The Respected Family

SUNDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—Cartoon
 4:30—Kanan the Adventurer
 5:00—Don't Dream
 6:00—Skippy
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—A Tour in France
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—American Funniest
 8:00—Killing for Living
 8:30—People and Places in Africa
 9:10—Renegade
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—North And South
 11:10—The Upper Hand

MONDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—Cartoon
 4:30—Kanan the Adventurer
 5:00—Tallasa
 6:00—Riding High
 6:30—Neighbours
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—French Programs
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—Hope And Gloria
 8:00—Perspective
 9:10—American Chart Show
 9:30—The Burned Bridge



People and Places in Africa, Sunday at 8:30

10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Law & Order
 11:10—Baywatch Nights

TUESDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—CRO
 4:30—Kanan the Adventurer
 5:00—Small Talk
 6:00—Border Town
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—French Programs
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—A Whole New Ball game

WEDNESDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—Mr. Bogus
 4:30—French Programs
 6:00—The Finder
 6:30—Neighbours
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—French Programs
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—Campus Cops

Amman cinemas

- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Volcano
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Fathers' Day
- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): G.I. Jane
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): 007... Tomorrow Never Dies
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): I Know What You Did Last Summer
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): Risala Ila Al Wali (Arabic)
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): Long Kiss Goodnight

8:00—Traces Of Guilt
 8:30—Hollywood Remembers
 8:30—History Makers
 9:00—Filler
 9:10—King Fu III
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Ellis Island

THURSDAY
 2:00—Holy Koran
 2:10—The Dinky Di's
 2:30—The Prince And The Pauper
 2:45—Energy Express
 2:45—Animal Show
 3:00—French Programs
 5:00—NBA
 6:00—Acapulco Bay
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—French Programs
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—Big Brother Jake
 8:00—Trivial Pursuit
 8:00—Great Romance
 8:30—Lois & Clark
 8:30—Dr. Quinn The Medicine Woman
 9:10—The Oprah Winfrey Show
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Feature Film

FRIDAY
 2:00—Holy Koran
 2:10—Teddy Ruxpin
 2:30—French Programs
 5:00—Lucky Luke
 5:30—Blue Water Dreaming
 6:00—Tarzan
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—French Program
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—F.R.I.E.N.D.S.
 8:00—Life on the Internet
 8:30—The Album Show
 9:10—Adventures of Brisco County
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—The Beast (Drama)

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI
 16:30—Conan l'aventurier
 17:00—Cajou
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Magazine L'enfant de Colomb

DIMANCHE
 16:30—Conan l'aventurier
 17:00—Magazine Faut pas rêver
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Le Tour de France

LUNDI
 16:30—Conan l'aventurier
 17:00—Thalassa
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Magazine scientifique Cinq sur cinq

MARDI
 16:30—Conan l'aventurier
 17:00—Savoir plus santé
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Têtes chercheuses

MERCREDI
 16:30—Arsène Lupin
 17:00—Ushuaia
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—E-M6

JEUDI
 15:00—Qui est qui
 15:30—An Casino de Paris
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Atomes crochus

VENREDI
 15:00—Qui est qui
 15:30—Julie Lescaut
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Allô la Terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV

American Music Awards



Back Street Boys



Paula Abdul



Wu Tang Clan

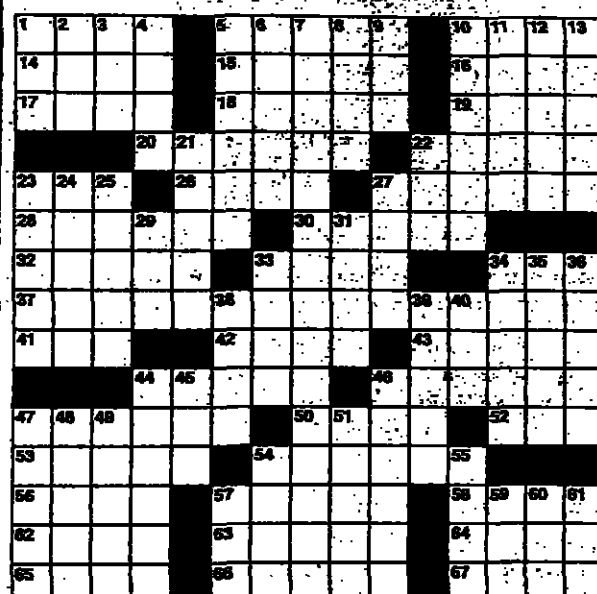


Julio Iglesias



Cybill Shepherd

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS**
 1 Provide
 5 Wide or loose
 10 Breeze
 14 Arm bone
 15 Sophisticated
 16 Wicked
 17 Abominable
 18 Like a willow
 19 Gaseous
 20 Cast out
 22 Kichan
 23 The of St. Agnes
 25 In of Hammer and
 28 Extend on
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 16 Without
 17 Moist or
 18 Adolescent
 19 Family cycle member
 20 Ina country
 21 Adolescent
 22 Fingplace
 23 S.A.T., for one
- 37** Emerged from section
41 Modern outfit
42 Passion
43 Pungent
44 Mont
45 Kean-minded
47 Lemon-like fruit
50 Went by car
52 Feast or lack
53 Point
54 Males
55 Current
56 Don't lend
58 Declares
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65 Adolescent
66 Fingplace
67 S.A.T., for one
- 51** Great quality
53 Bowler
54 Confusion
55 a customer
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58 Heald
59 Gayle
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61 Polka
62 Shetland
63 Moo
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THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun's going into Aquarius. This is going to be good news for all the Fire and Air signs.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Your life gets easier as friends play a more important role. One in particular is quite prominent.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Put business first. Take on a strong partner to win. Reach a successful conclusion to hassles by using new skills.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). You're lucky. The sun goes into Aquarius and for the next month you're smarter. That's useful at work. Pressure forces you to use new skills.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Don't argue with your partner. You'll need that person's help later. Pressures ease but others take their place. Your focus shifts to money.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). A friend pushes you in the right direction. You and an intellectual partner don't always agree, but you work well together.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Profess your love to your sweetheart. You'll have less time for romance the next few weeks, so don't miss that opportunity.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're powerful, but you'll do better later. Money problems surface. Money is coming. You'll notice the difference between the theoretical and practical.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Don't forget to make that call, if you want to get something for the home. Let people know what you want or you'll get something else.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Friends are fun but get in the way of making money. Conditions change. For the next month it's easier to learn technical matters.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Chances of success are greatest if you act now. Turn down an invitation, due to lack of funds. An expenditure makes life easier.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Finish old business quickly. An older person has new assignments for you. Teach a friend a new trick.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Help a friend achieve something you both want. Your focus is on finishing old work. Save enough money to do something you promised a friend.

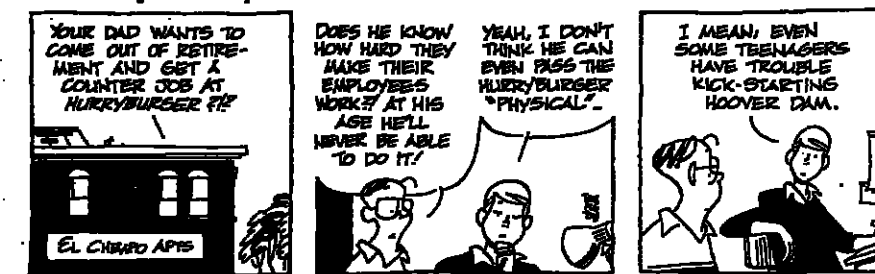
If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Travel dominates the first part of the year, with your career demanding attention later. You can find job security this year, if you pass the test.

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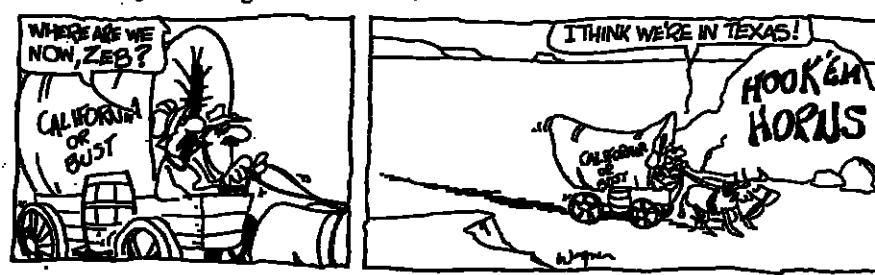
PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

REWEFE

YOSIN

BLIMEN

BORTED

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: FEWER NOISY NIMBLE DEBTOR

Answer: A good place to do some reading - BETWEEN THE LINES

Words of Wisdom

In the middle of conflict, it is best to provide light, not heat.

When the cup is full, handle it carefully.

Circumstances are the instruments of the wise and the burden of the weak.

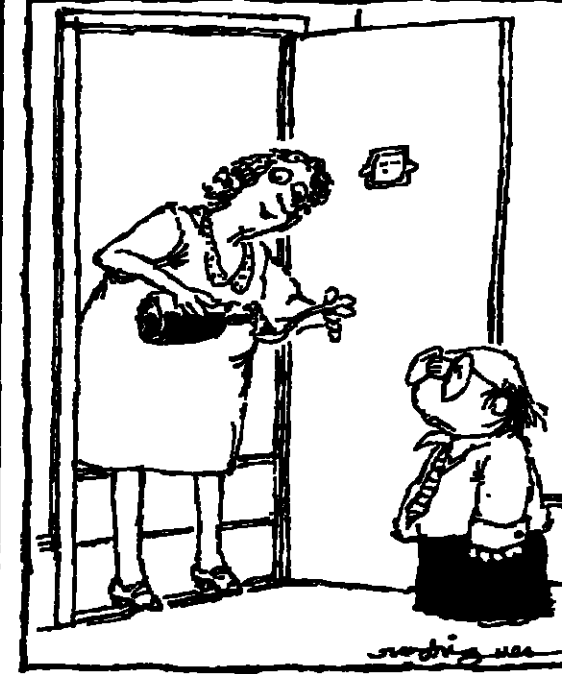
If you get into a battle with a dirty fighter, you're bound to walk away with some black marks.

Look for the best in others in order to get the best out of them.

Grief is temporary pain; indulgence of grief is a life-time loss.

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CHARLIE



"The landlord said you had the flu. What you need is this remedy my mother brought over from the old country. Here—keep two tablespoons in each of your pockets until the next full moon..."

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Portrait

Le Roi, mon déclin

Zohrab Markarian est un photographe professionnel, au service du Roi Hussein depuis plusieurs années. Il nous raconte comment le souverain hachémite a changé sa vie.



Le photographe Zohrab Markarian à la droite de son pygmalion.

Ses cheveux blancs et ses moustaches sur son poil noir soulignent la sagesse de son regard. Ses yeux reflètent sa grande expérience. Avec 32 ans de photographie derrière lui, Zohrab Markarian donne l'impression qu'on peut apprendre beaucoup de lui. Sa tranquillité d'homme d'une cinquantaine d'années trompe un peu les gens. Cet Arménien d'origine est très exigeant dans son travail. Un métier découvert à l'université mais surtout au contact des grands professionnels de la photo résidant en Jordanie. C'est grâce à eux qu'il rencontre le Roi Hussein dont il va devenir très proche. Sa Majesté l'envoie se perfectionner un an à New York où il pratique toutes les formes de photographie : reportages, portraits... C'est à son retour des États-Unis que se produit le déclin si l'on peut dire : « Le Roi, lui-même photographe, m'a un jour donné un appareil spécial

pour prendre des paysages, se souvenant-il, tout a changé pour moi à partir de ce moment-là. J'ai compris que je pouvais faire beaucoup de choses en Jordanie. Les paysages y sont magnifiques et me donnent la sensation d'être libre et de ne pas avoir de contraintes quotidiennes. C'était un défi. Zohrab Markarian devient aussi l'un des photographes privilégiés du Roi. Il le suit dans ses voyages et ses photos sont publiées dans de nombreuses revues à l'étranger. «Après du roi, j'ai changé à 100%. J'ai vu la vie d'une autre manière, j'ai appris à comprendre les gens sans faire de différences». Et il ajoute en insistant sur l'importance de la relation avec son sujet : «La photographie, c'est plus que l'appareil, c'est avoir un contact direct avec les personnes. Pour faire du bon travail, il est essentiel de bien connaître la personne». Va-t-il se fendre de quelques confi-

dences sur les arcanes royales ? Zohrab veut rester discret. Son sujet préféré le regarde. Sur les murs sont affichés plusieurs clichés de la famille royale. Modestement, il prétend peu connaître le Roi avant de laisser échapper que «c'est quelqu'un de tout à fait normal sans excentricités. Il est vrai qu'il est très occupé mais il a un moment à consacrer à chacun». Lui-même n'a pas beaucoup de temps à lui. Au milieu du téléphone qui sonne, de la secrétaire, et des nombreux visiteurs, il s'agit pour préparer le vernissage de sa nouvelle galerie, nouvelle étonnante entre les hautes technologies photographiques et les couleurs naturelles des décorations. Prévue le 21 mars prochain, jour de la fête de toutes les mamans, Zohrab voulait rendre hommage à la mère de son pygmalion royal. ■

Amineh Ishtay



Les paysages, autre passion de Markarian. Ici, le Wadi Ram.

Fatwa favorable aux étrangères divorcées d'Égyptiens

Le mufti d'Égypte a interdit pour la première fois aux Égyptiens d'enlever après le divorce leurs enfants qui vivent à l'étranger avec leur mère non musulmane ou de les empêcher de quitter le pays. «Si la mère divorcée d'un Égyptien musulman appartient à une religion du Livre (christianisme ou judaïsme) elle a le droit de garder son enfant jusqu'à l'âge de raison», qui est de 7 ans selon la loi égyptienne, précise le mufti avant d'ajouter que «le père n'a pas le droit de ramener son enfant dans un pays où ne vit pas la mère car il lui prive de son droit de garde». Le dignitaire religieux souligne d'autre part que «la mère n'a pas le droit de priver le père de voir son fils et du droit de visite». Il accorde en outre au père le droit de se pourvoir en justice pour contester la garde de la mère «s'il est établi que cette dernière tente d'incliquer à l'enfant une autre religion que l'islam». Après l'âge de sept ans, «l'enfant passera sous la garde du père pour l'aider, s'il s'agit d'un garçon, à choisir sa carrière, et s'il s'agit d'une fille, de la protéger et de la marier», indique encore le mufti dans cette fatwa édictée à la demande du ministère de la justice. De très nombreux incidents ont opposé des dernières années les mères étrangères et non musulmanes à leurs pères égyptiens. Les ambassades doivent tenter de régler ce type de problèmes car les tribunaux ou la police ont souvent donné raison au père égyptien.

Pouvoir

Gouvernement-Justice : 1-1

En janvier, la justice s'opposait à l'application de la nouvelle loi sur la presse et ridiculisait le gouvernement. Avec la mise en retraite soudaine du président du Conseil Judiciaire, le pouvoir exécutif prend sa revanche. Au milieu, les Jordaniens comptent les coups et se posent des questions sur l'indépendance de leur justice.

Farouq Kilani appartenait au Conseil judiciaire (la plus haute instance du royaume, l'équivalent du Conseil supérieur de la magistrature en France) depuis à peine trois mois. Il en était de droit le président puisqu'il était aussi à la tête de la Cour de Cassation. Farouq Kilani, l'homme le plus puissant du pouvoir judiciaire, balayé par une décision unanime des membres du Conseil judiciaire. Avant lui, deux autres juges à ce poste prestigieux avaient subi la même mésaventure.

À la suite de sa mise à l'écart, Farouq Kilani a choisi de contre-attaquer accusant le ministre de la justice Riad Chaka d'avoir manipulé les membres du Conseil judiciaire, d'entraver les réformes de la justice, enfin, et c'est le plus grave, «d'intervenir quotidiennement dans les affaires des tribunaux et de soutenir les magistrats corrompus». Kilani

a rappelé en outre le rôle du même ministre dans ce qu'on a appelé en 1989 «le massacre du système judiciaire». Co n'est pas la première fois que la question de l'indépendance de la justice fait les gros titres. Déjà dans sa lettre à l'ancien Premier ministre Kabarti, le Roi Hussein avait demandé l'introduction d'une réforme du système. De même, dans un discours prononcé il y a un an à la remise des diplômes à l'Institut des juges, le Prince Hassan avait disséqué les dysfonctionnements de la justice : situation matérielle des magistrats, lenteur des procédures, travail surchargé des magistrats, archaïsme des méthodes, lacunes de l'information et, indépendance des juges. Le Prince héritier appelait d'urgence à une série de réformes.

Aujourd'hui, ces réformes sont encore dans les cartons. Le ministre de la Justice prétend au contraire que les change-

ments sont en cours. Sans démentir précisément les accusations de Kilani, Riad Chaka a réitéré sa conviction de «l'indépendance totale de la justice jordanienne», mais il est resté très vague sur les raisons du limogement de Kilani. On ne saura pas pourquoi le ministre a recommandé d'un homme (voir encadré) dont il avait appuyé la promotion quelques mois plus tôt. En très peu de temps en effet, Farouq Kilani a gravi les échelons les plus élevés de la hiérarchie judiciaire :



Nouveau Palais de justice, nouvelles pratiques ?

nommé l'été dernier à la tête de la Haute Cour de justice, il s'était retrouvé ensuite à la présidence de la Cour de Cassa-

tion et de faire à la tête du Conseil judiciaire. Dans les couloirs du Palais de justice, les rumeurs vont bon train. Selon certains, Kilani était en train de préparer une liste de magistrats à renvoyer dans leurs foyers, «pour incompetence». Ceux-ci avec l'aide du ministre auraient alors tout fait pour pousser vers la sortie cet empêcheur de tourner en rond. Sami Habayeb, un célèbre avocat, croit pour sa part que «Kilani n'était pas très populaire parmi ses collègues qui le trouvaient trop agressif dans ses décisions».

Enfin le vieil homme, connu pour son intégrité et sa volonté réformatrice, aurait irrité le gouvernement à plusieurs reprises. Notamment à propos de la loi sur la presse et les publications. Alors qu'il était président de la Haute Cour de justice, Kilani avait exprimé son désaccord avec cette loi temporaire, un avis qui n'avait pas laissé indifférents les juges de la Haute Cour. Ceux-ci avaient ensuite prononcé l'inconstitutionnalité de la loi et annulé la suspension des hebdomadaires. Un camouflet que le gouvernement a toujours en travers de la gorge. ■

Nabed Al-Khatib et Yannick Laine

Suleiman Sweiss

Attention aux mauvaises habitudes !

«Les magistrats sont indépendants et ne sont subordonnés qu'à la loi». L'article 97 de la Constitution jordanienne est sans ambiguïté. Les magistrats peuvent et doivent exercer leur fonction en toute indépendance. Une loi a même été promulguée en 1972 pour protéger l'intégrité des juges. A priori, l'intervention du ministre de la justice dans le système judiciaire est donc limitée. Néanmoins, il existe dans la loi jordanienne toute une série de règles qui infirment ce postulat.

Le ministre de la justice est ainsi investi d'un droit de «contrôle administratif» sur les juges. Selon l'avocat Sami Habayeb, ce contrôle est limité à un droit de regard sur le fonctionnement des tribunaux (équipement, propriété etc.).

Il a le pouvoir de nommer temporairement un magistrat du siège dans une cour ou un tribunal, inférieur à son poste, sans justification. «C'est une pratique qui n'est pas exceptionnelle et qui ébranle certains juges», affirme l'avocat Hani Al-Dahleh.

Le ministre de la justice peut aussi rappeler à l'ordre un magistrat qui aurait enfreint la déontologie ou les obli-

gations de sa fonction. Ce «rappel à l'ordre» n'a pas de force contraignante mais il peut être conservé par le ministre dans «le dossier secret du juge».

Enfin, il peut demander de déclencher des poursuites disciplinaires à l'encontre d'un magistrat. Mais aujourd'hui, c'est le Conseil judiciaire qui est compétent pour conduire cette action.

Le Conseil judiciaire est l'instance la plus importante du système judiciaire. C'est lui qui décide des nominations, des promotions et des transferts des juges. Son indépendance est sacrée. Pourtant, il est encore, sa marge de manœuvre reste relative.

Le Roi approuve les résolutions du Conseil judiciaire.

Il est composé de 10 membres dont le secrétaire général et le chef de l'inspection du Ministère de la justice. Comme dans l'affaire Kilani, certaines de ses décisions sont prises après recommandation du ministre de la justice. Des mauvaises langues disent que les propositions ministérielles ont souvent valeur d'ordre. Pour l'avocat, Sami Habayeb «donc dépend des membres du Conseil». Mais il ajoute qu'«ordinairement ils sont sages et rappelle que «de bons juges, ce sont

des juges forts».

En tant que membre de la Haute Cour de justice, le juge Abdullah Hadad croit toujours à l'indépendance de son pouvoir après 35 ans de carrière. Il veut pour preuve le verdict rendu il y a quelques mois. Cependant, tous n'ont pas ses certitudes. Les juges craignent de parler, on n'accepte pas de répondre sur ce sujet sensible qu'avec l'autorisation de leur ministre de tutelle.

Faut-il en conclure à la corruption généralisée du système judiciaire jordanien ? En réalité, l'intégrité du pouvoir judiciaire est surtout menacée par les mauvaises habitudes de l'exécutif à son égard. Comme dans d'autres pays (à commencer par la France), l'indépendance de la justice est issue des rapports de force qui jouent en permanence entre les magistrats et le pouvoir exécutif. Guerre d'influence résumée comme suit par Sami Habayeb : «Si nous appliquons honnêtement ce que nous avons, c'est un bon système».

Nabed Al-Khatib et Yannick Laine

Suleiman Sweiss

Nouvelles du Pays

Santé

C'est meilleur chez les nutritionnistes

L'obésité progresse. Rien à voir avec les États-Unis et leurs 50 millions de «gros». Mais les Jordaniens prennent les devants et surveillent ce qu'ils mangent.

L'obésité, c'est...

- 100 millions de personnes dans le monde qui nécessitent des soins thérapeutiques (dont la moitié aux États-Unis)
- De 5 à 10 millions en France.
- 14,5% des enfants qui en France en sont menacés (3% il y a 20 ans).
- 300.000 décès par an aux États-Unis. Cette maladie accroît les risques cardio-vasculaires, le diabète ou le cancer.
- De 15 à 20% des adultes d'âge moyen en Europe.
- De 3 à 8% des dépenses de santé dans les pays occidentaux, autant que le cancer ou le sida.

«Si vous voulez perdre du poids, faites-le proprement». Dans la bouche de Souzan Nashashibi, nutritionniste et directrice d'un centre d'accompagnement, le conseil sonne comme un slogan. Plutôt efficace : depuis le début des années 90, les Jordaniens sont devenus plus attentifs à leur santé et ils ont commencé à s'intéresser à la diététique. Parfois en raison d'une maladie grave (anéémie, troubles cardio-vasculaires ou diabète), ils ont décidé de faire plus attention à leur ligne.

Enfin, conscients de l'importance des aliments naturels et surtout des conséquences de l'obésité, nombreux dans les classes moyennes et aisées de la société se sont précipités chez les nutritionnistes. Finie l'époque où l'on se contentait de suivre un régime trouvé par hasard en tournant les pages d'un magazine. Avec l'arrivée de l'obésité, les Jordaniens ont décidé de prendre leur poids en mains. En 10 ans, le nombre de personnes qui sont allées consulter un diététicien a augmenté de 40% et sur l'ensemble de cette population inquiète pour ses graisses en trop, plus de la moitié est atteinte d'obésité. Cette affection, caractérisée par une augmentation du tissu adipeux de l'organisme et un excès

de poids, est imputée généralement au comportement alimentaire, aux troubles du métabolisme, à l'insuffisance de l'activité physique et à l'hérédité. «D'après mon expérience dans ce domaine, tente d'expliquer Raula Ziadeh, j'ai remarqué que la demande diététique a progressé à partir de 1995. Les gens ont semble-t-il pris conscience des conséquences perverses d'un régime non-équilibré de l'alimentation». Bref, après les médicaments, la psychothérapie, la chirurgie, le sport ou les régimes hypocaloriques, les candidats à la perte de poids se tournent aujourd'hui vers les nutritionnistes et les «programmes alimentaires», expression scientifique venue remplacer le démodé «régime». «C'est un programme à long terme, qui vise à changer la façon de vivre, insiste Souzan Nashashibi, il s'agit d'une thérapie comprehensive qui permet l'adoption de nouvelles habitudes alimentaires en réduisant la dépendance aux médicaments. Chaque programme alimentaire est unique et reflète l'état de santé de l'individu, c'est-à-dire que ses aspects physiologiques et psychologiques sont pris en considération. Il est donc impossible d'appliquer le même pro-

gramme à plusieurs personnes». Durée des sacrifices : entre trois mois pour perdre 7-10 kilos et 6 mois pour en perdre 12 à 15. «Il faut avoir de la patience et surtout de la motivation pour réussir un programme alimentaire», précise Raula, et il s'accompagne toujours d'une activité physique (marche, natation, tennis...) qui renforce le processus. Du travail à long terme, au bout duquel le patient doit être en mesure d'éviter les rechutes. Quel de plus démoralisant en effet que ces kilos perdus et repris quelques semaines plus tard. ■

Rana Kavar-Bagaeen

Dans l'école spécialisée de Margency, les enfants confectionnent eux-mêmes leurs repas

En France, une école des petits gros

«Quand on est tous pareils, c'est un peu de souffrance qui s'envole». Pour les 50 adolescents qui ont du poids à perdre, l'internat diététique de Margency (région parisienne) est un havre de paix. Ici viennent les cas les plus désespérés : 10% des jeunes élèves pèsent plus de 150 kilos, 25% d'entre eux avoisinent les 125 kilos et pour les mieux lotis, la balance affiche tout de même 100 kilos. Un drame lorsqu'on a tout juste 13 ans, l'âge des premiers émois amoureux et des sorties au McDo entre copains. Car l'obésité infantile est une affection, hélas ! longtemps oubliée de la recherche. Aujourd'hui, 10% des enfants français sont de véritables obèses, leur poids étant de 130% supérieur à la moyenne. Leur nombre a triplé en trois ans ! En attendant les progrès de la recherche, les ados de Margency

se battent avec énergie pour ne plus être «arabes». Au programme, des leçons de cuisine pour apprendre à cuisiner les légumes, et des «exercices» physiques (gymnastique, longues marches, piscine...). Les enfants parviennent ainsi à perdre 3 à 5 kilos par semaine. Un beau succès, durable pour certains. Pour d'autres (10% des élèves), l'échec est total. Il n'est pas facile en effet d'affronter de nouveau la vie de famille et ses tentations, bien que les jeunes y soient préparés psychologiquement. «Notre objectif, rappelle la psychologue de l'établissement, est de leur faire prendre conscience de leur responsabilité dans les relations interpersonnelles. Et d'aimer leur corps».

Le Jourdain avec l'aide de l'Agence

هناك من

Tel. 4

Bodyguard has some memory of aftermath of crash, he says

By John Burgess

LONDON—Bit by bit, his memory is returning. Trevor Rees-Jones, the bodyguard who survived the crash that killed Diana, Princess of Wales, has told a newspaper here that he remembers hearing her calling out her boyfriend Dodi Fayed's name just after the impact.

"I have had flashes of a female voice calling out in the back of the car," Rees-Jones was quoted as telling the Mirror newspaper in his first press interview since Diana's death last August. "First it's a groan. Then Dodi's name is called. It could only have been Princess Diana. I was conscious and so was she."

His account appeared amid other developments in the story Britain can't leave behind: Diana's executors published her will, which leaves the bulk of a \$35.8 million estate in trust to her two sons, Prince William and Prince Harry. And Dodi Fayed's father, Harrods department store owner Mohamed Al Fayed, submitted to arrest and questioning at a London police station in connection with a criminal action brought by a business rival. He was released later on bail, with no charges filed against him.

From the moment it became clear that Rees-Jones, who was in the front passenger seat of the Mercedes, would survive, police hoped he would help sort out culpability for the crash, notably the role that pursuing photographers might have played. But on recovering, he told investigators he had no memory of the accident.

Rees-Jones, 29, who suffered massive injuries to his face, has garnered wide sympathy among people here as a decent man under tremendous pressure. He remains in the employ of Mohamed Fayed, as he was the night of the crash.

Diana's condition immediately after the impact has been the subject of much debate. By some accounts she was unconscious; by others she murmured, "Leave me alone," to people who drew near. Rees-Jones's comments bolster the second theory.

He also said that two cars and a motorbike pursued the Mercedes as it left the Ritz Hotel in Paris. "One seemed to be a white car with a boot (trunk) which opened at the back and had two

doors," he said. French police had shown him photos of a white Fiat Uno like one they believe collided with the Mercedes in the tunnel, but Rees-Jones said, "I can't help much with that kind of detail."

Of the Mercedes' driver, Henri Paul, whose autopsy found more than three times the legal limit of alcohol in his blood, Rees-Jones said, "I had no reason to suspect he was drunk. He did not look or sound like he had been drinking. He just seemed his normal self. . . . He sat at the bar drinking some yellow liquid that I assumed was alcohol."

Some reports have said Paul was drinking pastis, a yellowish aniseed-based aperitif popular in France.

William Bourdon, a French lawyer representing one of the photographers in the case, declined comment on the interview. "What will be interesting is what he will say to the judge" in France, Bourdon said.

Rees-Jones says that based on his new memories, he wants to meet again with the judge investigating the crash. Much of his account as published Monday matched leaked reports of his earlier statements to the judge.

In other developments Monday, lawyers representing Diana's executors took the unusual step of publishing her will due to the intense public interest. The estate, consisting mainly of stock, jewelry, cash and belongings in London's Kensington Palace, her last residence, rang up at \$35.8 million, of which about \$14.4 million was paid in estate and personal tax.

Her two sons will get the majority of the estate when they turn 30. Other beneficiaries include her 17 godchildren and her former butler, Paul Burrell.

Mohamed Fayed's arrest and questioning Monday grew out of an action that London tycoon Roland "Tiny" Rowland brought against him in December, alleging that Fayed conspired to steal things from a safe deposit box that Rowland maintained in Fayed's Harrods department store. A spokesman for Fayed told the Press Association, Britain's domestic news service, that the allegations were false. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Gross excess drags down this Bilgy blockbuster

Titanic

By Tim Page

EVERY 50 often a motion picture appears that seems to sweep the world before it. The critics trot out their superlatives, our friends report back glowingly, and the money and awards come pouring in. Meanwhile, all but invisibly, a mildly disgruntled subculture comes to life, made up of people who simply cannot understand what the fuss is all about.

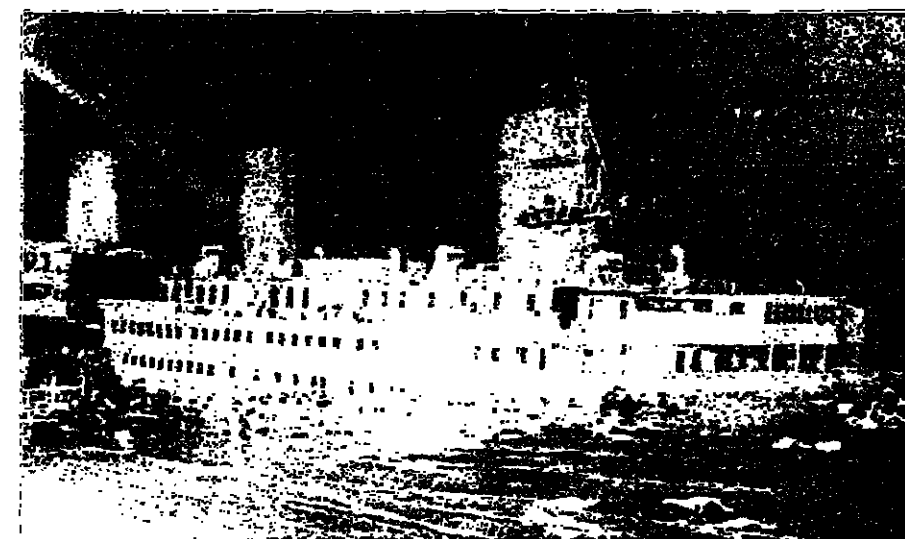
Let's go right to the point: I hate "Titanic." I haven't felt so isolated since I hated "Forrest Gump." I grant the film its spectacular effects, its grand scope and some attractive performances. And I certainly hope it will galvanize a younger generation with the understanding that history can be both thrilling and passionate, albeit on a staid and more adult level than represented by the film.

But "Titanic" itself strikes me as gaseous, overblown and, in some ways, downright pernicious, imbued with a snide and debasing populism that could have come right out of a Depression-era morality fable. Rich people are bad, you see: virtually all of the passengers in the Titanic's first-class cabin are clipped, Mammon-worshipping monsters with blood colder

than the fatal iceberg. The sole exception is the American Molly Brown, who speaks as if she were a cross between Mae West and the Beverly Hillsbillies, with a folksy vulgarity we are encouraged to cheer on.

Down in steerage, it's a different show, of course—strong, hearty, lusty men and women who spit, leer and purr, embracing life and one another with equal gusto. Here, the "poor little rich girl" heroine can get wild and funky with the pros: she can escape the "narrow people and mindless chatter" from first class and bask in the doubtless more cultivated discourse below deck.

The love story is no better than any number of bodice-rippers from romance fiction: it seems a long fantasy, sexual and otherwise, dictated by a spoiled, thwarted teenage girl. Within the space of a few minutes, Rose Bukater (Kate Winslet) upsets her mother by lighting up a cigarette, sasses her "betters," pouts and runs away, flirts with suicide ("They'll be sorry . . .") and is rescued by a hand-



some young man, Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio). Lo and behold, he turns out to be an Artist, and even though his own sketches would make their most appropriate impression if painted on velvet, he talks knowingly of Monet and Picasso. Eureka—the Sensitive Male! She poses in the nude for him but he is too "professional" to lay a hand on her.

Later on, of course, the two make love and, then, still later, she gets to give the finger to an evil pseudo-Daddy figure who chases her around the deck. Finally, she is transformed into an action heroine, when she pulls off her dress and swims through the cold water to rescue her lover, however briefly. By the end of the film, she is, to use the repellent cliché, "empowered."

The many anachronisms in the film have not gone unnoticed. More annoying is the way the only sympathetic characters behave like raucous and ill-mannered con-

temporary Americans (a thread of distasteful anti-English sentiment pervades the film). "Titanic" celebrates a dangerous distortion of democracy: here, the ideal is not a system that permits worthy people to learn and rise, regardless of modest origins, but rather a vast leveling, where the lowest common denominator is exalted, and anything that smacks of manners or intelligence is suspect.

The dread aristocrats say things like "Charmed, I'm sure" through clenched teeth, and expect their guests to know which fork to use at dinner; moreover, the men commit such crimes against humanity as retiring to the study after dinner for brandy and cigars. Director James Cameron's reductive agenda precludes a fair representation of the aged Isidor and Ida Straus, the founders of Macy's, who went down on the ship together. Isidor would not board a lifeboat before the other men; Ida refused to leave her husband.

Finally, only Hollywood could give us a film about the Titanic with a happy ending. Has it become too much to ask for a respectful, stoic representation of human tragedy? "Don't think!" DiCaprio shouts as he tries to teach Winslet to whirl about in an informal dance. The makers of "Titanic" lived up to his advice. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Kate Winslet, DiCaprio and DiCaprio

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THE STAR'S WORK COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NO

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Microsoft in trouble, Gates attends hearings

WELL, FROM the looks of it, Microsoft is in 'hot' water, as twenty seven states in the USA have endorsed the Justice Department lawsuit claiming Microsoft's anti-trust 'tactics'.

What is this whole story about, you may wonder? Where have you been for the past couple of months?

The whole issue started with Microsoft's utilization of its dominant position as an operating systems supplier, in pushing its Internet browser software, Explorer.

It was alleged by Microsoft competitors, such as Netscape, that Microsoft used its position to pressure PC vendors and manufacturers to package Internet Explorer as part of their offering to buyers, if they wanted to maintain strong relations with Microsoft.

The result was that most computer vendors and manu-

facturers, who already incorporate Windows 95 and Microsoft Windows applications as part of their systems, chose Microsoft Internet Explorer over competing packages such as Netscape Navigator. These practices on behalf of Microsoft were viewed as anti-trust violations, which resulted from exploitation of a monopolistic advantage.

Accordingly, a case was brought against Microsoft in 1995, which was resolved by Microsoft's pledge not to exercise its power in one area (operating systems) to push its products in another (Internet browsers and software).

The matter came into the forefront once again towards the end of 1997 and the beginning of 1998, when allegations arose that Microsoft would

incorporate Internet Explorer as part of the upcoming operating system, Windows 98. By doing so, Microsoft would absolutely lock out competitors and secure supremacy for its Internet browser.

The Justice Department in the USA has brought charges against Microsoft regarding this matter, and over two dozen states have supported it. In fact, on Wednesday 4 March, 1998, (one day before you read this), the American Congress will hold hearings on the matter, including Chairman of Netscape and Oracle, two arch rivals of Microsoft and, of course, Bill Gates himself.

In commenting on this whole issue, Bill Gates plainly stated that he doesn't think his company broke the law, and that Microsoft wants to be creative and innovative; he hoped that it would be understood that Microsoft always 'wants to do the right thing, and that Microsoft doesn't think it has done otherwise'.

In a way, in spite of many people's conviction that Microsoft may be too big or may exercise its power negatively, we all have to admit that Microsoft produces excellent software and that our

computing-lives wouldn't be the same without Microsoft's efficient, productivity applications and operating systems.

So, you may wonder, how will all the legal implications transpire to affect you, the computer user. Well, for one thing, if Microsoft's efforts to incorporate Explorer as part of its Windows 98 Active Desktop are blocked, then you will not be able to use your operating system to tap into the Internet straight away. All the functions, some of which are very useful, which have been built-in by Microsoft will be removed.

Of course, all these added benefits may be used once you install a separate copy of Internet Explorer. As the legal aspects shape up, especially this week, it will become clearer what will happen.

Why users may require Internet Explorer as part of Windows: 'Auto Update' feature in Win98

AS PART of Microsoft's preparations for the launch of Windows 98, the successor to Windows 95, the company intends to include an interesting feature called 'Windows Update'.

The way it works is as follows: After clicking on the Start button, you then click the Update button. Accordingly, Windows 98 opens Internet Explorer (IE) and hooks up to the Microsoft Web site. The idea is to download updates from the Microsoft site, but it is performed as part of an advanced procedure, by which the system check your computer against a list of updates and offers suggestions regarding the ones needed to upgrade your software!

This is in line with a new wave of downloading updates, which has been adopted by most major software publishers including Symantec, QuarterDeck and others. The thing is that utilizing the automatic update feature in Windows 98 means that the user needs to have Internet Explorer. This brings to mind the case brought against Microsoft, regarding Internet Explorer 4.0. The law suit is with regard to 'monopolistic practices that the Federal Trade Commission and others are charging Microsoft with. They claim that Microsoft pressures computer vendors and dealers to include Internet Explorer as part of their offering, instead of competing software such as Net-scape Navigator. In such cases, Microsoft uses its power as the supplier of the operating system! What's more, by including Internet Explorer as part of Win 98, Microsoft would virtually lock out its competition. After all, if a user gets an Internet browser software with his/her operating system, what's the point in going out to buy another.

Some voices are being raised in support of Microsoft, mainly due to views that it would be more practical for users to enjoy features like 'Automatic Update' and others, straight out of the box. In any case, the debate rages on regarding Internet Explorer.

Apple QuickTime 3 wins prestigious awards

APPLE COMPUTER Inc. announced that its QuickTime 3 has been chosen to receive two of the industry's highest honors.

At the recent Internet Showcase conference QuickTime 3 was announced as winner of the 1998 Hyper Award in the category of System Software.

These recognitions further establish QuickTime 3 as the unquestioned industry standard for creating and publishing digital media.

"These honors from Internet Showcase and NewMedia magazine are endorsements of QuickTime 3's unique, multi-platform capabilities and integral role in the new media industry," said Peter Hoddie, Senior QuickTime Architect, Apple Computer, Inc.

QuickTime 3 epitomizes what Apple software is all about. In delivering outstanding ease of use and unparalleled functionality, it raises the bar for the enter industry.

"Digital professionals look to NewMedia's Hyper Awards when selecting the products and technologies that will take digital media into the 21st century," said NewMedia Chairman & CEO, Richard Landry. "Hyper Award winners are chosen by the magazine's editorial staff, contributing editors and other experts, and they represent the highest achievements in innovation and technol-

ogy for the creation and delivery of multimedia content. It is used for professional video editing, web site creation, and the development of CD-ROMs. QuickTime 3 has won several industry awards including Videography's National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) '97 Editors' Choice Award, Television Broadcast Magazine's NAB Editors' Pick of Show Award, and the 1997 NewMedia Hyper award for System Software. QuickTime 3.0 is the latest release of Apple Computer's widely adopted software architecture for creating and publishing digital media. QuickTime 3 is significant as it brings the full power of QuickTime including the ability to capture, edit, compress, process and playback digital media for the first time to all major computer platforms, including Mac OS 8.x and Mac OS 7.x Win 95 and Win NT."

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INTERFAE BY ZEID NASSER

The situation of Jordan's software publishers in the region: Absence or silence?

LOOKING THROUGH regional computer and information technology magazines like *BYTE Middle East* and *Windows User Middle East*, you tend to notice that the majority of Arabic software is coming from countries like Egypt and Lebanon. Where are the Jordanian software packages, you may wonder?

Well, they're keeping quiet, I suppose. It is somewhat disappointing to see that after all these years of enthusiasm that Jordan's software development companies would make their mark felt, they have fell short in a way of making the deserved regional impact.

Don't get me wrong! Jordanian software developers and programmers are among the best in the region, and some have world class skills; but Jordanian software publishing companies are not performing too well in the region's competitive market.

What's more, most top Jordanian software development companies are handling large business projects in the region, as software consultants or as customized solutions providers.

This is all fine, and it is good news for Jordan's export potential, but it has been accompanied by a shrinkage in their presence in the ready-made (off-the-shelf) software business.

What went wrong? It seems that most have not had the financial and logistical support to enter regional markets with strength. It takes a concentrated marketing effort, and a powerful local presence to carry out the distribution, installation and after-sales support required for off-the-shelf packages.

Of course, amidst this view, there are some Jordanian companies who shine in the ready-made (off-the-shelf) software market. Companies like Turath and Zeine Technological Applications are prominent. Also, IdealSoft and Comsoft still enjoy reasonable presence in Gulf markets, but need to upgrade their marketing structure in those countries.

Soon to enter the regional fray are the likes of Galaxy Software and other Jordanian companies who are trying to carve a niche for themselves in the Middle Eastern market. In any case, Jordanian companies need to gain more experience in tackling the challenges of neighboring markets. After all, the room for growth locally seems limited.

Sportster MessagePlus 56K

3COM HAS introduced a new IS Robotics modem, called the Sportster MessagePlus 56-K. It provides a complete, feature-rich communications package for the home or office. The Sportster MessagePlus can be left to store incoming fax and voice messages when the computer is switched off. It incorporates Flash Memory, offering the flexibility to upgrade for future enhancements.

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After 12 years:

Egypt's 'Pharoehs' beat South Africa to regain African title

OUAGADOUGOU. Burkina Faso Two goals in the opening 13 minutes ensured Egypt won a fourth African Nations Cup in Saturday's final against World Cup qualifiers South Africa. Ahmed Hassan struck after just five minutes and Tarek Mostafa scored eight minutes later to give Egypt a 2-0 victory over the defending champions.

But the two goals effectively killed the tournament's show-piece, with Egypt's defence competently holding out against an impatient South Africa attack in searing heat Egypt last won the trophy 12 years ago, but their victory

on Saturday saw them equal Ghana's record of four tournament triumphs. The win was a record achievement for 60-year-old coach Mahmoud Al-Gohari, who became the first man to win the African championship as both a player and coach.

He was in Egypt's winning team in 1959, when he ended as the tournament's leading goalscorer. Egypt's defensive organisation and quick-fire counter attacks had South Africa on the back foot but much of the game was played at half-pace because of the conditions. A quick build-up in midfield by Hany Ramzy and Hazem Imam set up Hassan for the first goal. He was allowed to run at the defence with the South Africans backing off and his shot took a deflection off the shoulder of Mark Fish to beat goalkeeper Brian Baloyi. South Africa's defence was caught napping again when a quickly taken free kick by Ramzy saw captain Hussam Hassan feed the ball for Mostafa to strike home from a tight angle.

There might have been two more goals for Egypt before half-time with Baloyi saving a point-blank shot from Ahmed Hassan and then from Hussam Hassan before the interval. The much-awaited struggle between Hussam Hassan and South African striker Benedict McCarthy to settle the issue of the tournament's leading goalscorer proved a disappointment with both players marked out of the game. They tied with seven goals a piece. South Africa's best effort came in the second half when John Moshoeu hit the upright with a shot from the edge of the penalty area, but his team's shooting and passing was off-target for much of the game. South Africa were seeking to become only the third team, and the first since Ghana in 1965, to successfully retain the trophy.

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Egyptian star Hussam Hassan, the top scorer

President Mubarak receives Egyptian heroes

CAIRO, Egypt—Egypt's soccer team flew home to a rapturous welcome from fans and congratulations from President Hosni Mubarak on Sunday after winning the African Nations' Cup for the first time in 12 years. Tens of thousands of ecstatic supporters thronged the airport to lay on a heroes' welcome for the national team who lifted the cup on Saturday with a 2-0 upset victory over South Africa in the Burkina Faso capital Ouagadougou. Mubarak, Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri and senior ministers were at the airport to congratulate the team for bringing the African Nations' Cup to Egypt for a record-equaling fourth time.

Clutching the cup, captain Hussam Hassan stepped off the plane on to a red carpet where a beaming Mubarak kissed him and the rest of the team in scenes shown live on state television. "This is the best present for Egypt," one fan said. Crowds waved Egyptian flags and chanted "Egypt, Egypt" and "Gohari, Gohari" to salute team coach Mahmoud El-Gohari, 60, who played in Egypt's winning team in the same competition in 1959.

Fans climbed on to the roofs of kiosks and other buildings outside the airport perimeter as the flag-decked team bus inched through jubilant supporters towards the national stadium. The crowds held up the motorcade of visiting Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal, who arrived at Cairo airport shortly after the Egyptian squad, airport sources said.

Several scheduled flights were delayed because departing were unable to weave their way through the mass of supporters blocking the route to the airport, the sources said.

Rejoicing has bubbled virtually non-stop in Cairo since the referee blew the final whistle in Ouagadougou, sending Egyptians into the streets to honk car horns, dance and beat drums. The triumph followed a run of disappointments and problems off the field.

Egypt failed to reach this year's World Cup finals in France or the previous World Cup in the United States.

New stars rise at African Nations Cup

■ Egypt's Hassan, 31, scored seven goals going into the final. He will miss out on France but despite his age still has his sights on an appearance in 2002. "I love playing football. I love winning. I think I am fit enough to go on for a long time. There will be players in France who are in their mid-30 such as Carlos Valderrama. Age is not important as long as you are fit enough."

■ Morocco's captain and stalwart in defence, Noureddine Naybet, put in a solid performance and next appears in France in the World Cup.

■ South African striker Benedict McCarthy

set alight the 21st African Nations' Cup in Burkina Faso with a clutch of goals that restored the flagging fortunes of the outgoing champions.

The 20-year-old Ajax star, who put four goals past Namibia to join an elite club of African marksmen, gave the Bafana Bafana (The Boys) a timely boost ahead of their first World Cup appearance in France in June. But solid and in some cases sparkling performances from some of Africa's veterans

principally Egypt's prolific striker Hussam Hassan—helped to underline that raw talent and youthful enthusiasm are not everything.

West Asian Zone basketball qualifiers Al Riyadi dashes Al Jazireh Aramex hopes and wins ticket to Malaysia finals

By Abdel Hamid Addasi
Special to The Star

LEBANON'S AL RIYADI, Friday, dashed Al Jazireh Aramex hopes down when he won the final and crucial match to decide the qualifier to the Asian Club Championship 87-77 (50-40) in the match held in the Sport's Palace in Al Hussein City and was attended by thousands of enthusiastic spectators.

In the second match Zobohan of Iran turned his loss 43-49 after the half-time to a big win 88-83 over Al Whideh of Syria to get the third place in the qualifiers.

Anwar Abdel Hal, top scorer

The Syrian player Anwar Abdel Hal was named the top scorer of the matches when he scored 125 points in four games (31.3 points) per game. American player of Al



Riyadi Micheal Cumberland came second and Jordanian player Hussam Lutfi came third.

Stars in the qualifiers

Many players in the participating teams captured the attention of the basketball

viewers like Michael Cumberland and Bryan Scott of Al Riyadi, Hamid Majlesi and Mohsen Sadeq Zadeh of Zobohan, Anwar Abdel Hal, Tarif Qutrah and Sherif Al-Sherif of Al Whideh, Yousif Abu Bakir, Hussam Lutfi and Naser Alawneh of Al Jazireh-Aramex, Abdel-Quader Mohammed of Al Mina.

Al Riyadi qualified to the Asian Club Championship which will be held in Malaysia between 25 April and 2 May after winning the sole ticket qualifying when he won four straight matches against Zobohan of Iran, Al Whideh of Syria, Al Mina and Yemen and finally Al Jazireh Aramex of Jordan.

Results of the matches
Al Jazireh Aramex vs Al Mina 96-26 (47-18)
Al Riyadi vs Zobohan 89-80 (50-41)
Al Riyadi vs Al Whideh 97-95 to (86-86) (43-46)
Zobohan vs Al Mina 125-51 (64-25)
Al Jazireh Aramex vs Zobohan 68-56 (35-37)
Al Whideh vs Al Mina 128-45 (72-25)
Al Riyadi vs Al Mina 101-57 (54-28)
Al Jazireh Aramex vs Al Whideh 90-81 (44-33)
Al Riyadi vs Al Jazireh Aramex 85-75 (50-40)
Zobohan vs Al Whideh 88-83 (43-49)



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